The fifth volume, depicting Shiro (an umbrella maker who hates wearing his loincloth) and Kojiro (a hot-blooded police officer who can't accept Shiro's slovenliness) on their adventure to solve underground cases in Showa Japan, is now here!! The volume includes "The Fog of Gento Police Station" story in which Kojiro and his superior, Saotome, unveil the darkness surrounding Flower Mist Religion; "Festival" story in which Shiro undresses himself for a refreshing change of atmosphere; and "The Innocent Infiltrator (Part 1)" story which leads us to a BIG SECRET (!?).

Adekan stacked Daruma game.

Daruma: a tumbling doll; a roly-poly figure

アゾロ
5
尚月地

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CHARACTER FILE 003

Yoshiwara Anri

Height: 181 cm
Weight: 65 kg
Age: 18
Birth date: October 7
Zodiac: Libra
Blood type: AB
Favorite foods: stew with demi glace sauce, vegetable soup, gratin pie, plain or cheese omelet, madeleine, speculaas, milk tea, candies, kuzu sakura, cream caramel
Foods that he dislikes: blue cheese, cakes with citrus fruits inside, natto
Favorite colors: red, white, light peach, beige, dark brown, light green
Likes: being hugged, playing with girls, being played by men, partying, cooking, gathering cute cooking utensils, singing, playing shamisen, designing or sewing clothes, creating miscellaneous goods, inventing stuff
Dislikes: having his territory or room entered without his permission
What he's not good at: obeying rules

Kuzu sakura: ball of red bean paste covered with Japanese arrowroot starch glaze and warped in sakura leaf

CHARACTER FILE 004

Aragami Saburota

Height: 175 cm
Weight: 66 kg
Age: 18
Birth date: March 12
Zodiac: Pisces
Blood type: A
Favorite foods: sukiyaki, sea bream sashimi, boiled tofu, eel, sushi, wild plants tenpura
Foods that he dislikes: mackerel sushi
Favorite colors: purple, scarlet, light green, deep blue
Likes: eating rare foods from foreign countries, wearing clothes from foreign countries as pajamas, watching water and normal theaters, reading teen girl novels (his guilty pleasure)
Dislikes: mediating family quarrels (his family affair is rather complex)
What he's not good at: hand-to-hand combat, all kinds of sports

SFX: BAM
SFX: WHACK
SOME-ONE HELP ME!!
WHY?! I DIDN'T DO ANY-THING!
HE'S ONE OF THE TREE PEOPLE. IT DOESN'T MATTER IF HE DIES.
BEAT HIM UNTIL HE COMES CLEAN.
Someone...!!

The fifteenth story

The Fifteenth Story

THE FOG OF GENTO POLICE STATION

Part 1

...the day of my business trip with my superior, Saotome-san.
wheeze
wheeze
I'M BEAT...
I CAN'T CLIMB THIS MOUNTAIN ANYMORE!!
Saotome Mizuhiko
Vice Senior Police Officer
Still, Saotome-san is widely known for solving cases quickly.
All he does at work is listen to what the criminals have to say.
Although he's a vice senior police officer, he lacks stamina. He can't even wield a sword.
He also likes playing pranks on people.
Nooooo..! My back hurts!!
KYAAA!!
Down they go!!
Now is my chance!
Sao-tome-san is not easy to under-stand.
He's a man of mystery.
I CAN'T TAKE THIS ANY-MORE~~
BUT THERE'S NO OTHER WAY SINCE KENZAN-CHO IS LOCATED IN A STEEP AREA OF THE MOUNTAIN.

IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT YOU'RE SENT TO A PLACE LIKE THIS, SAOTOME-SAN.
YES, BUT I'M GLAD THAT YOU CAME ALONG. BECAUSE AROUND HERE...
APPEAR
LIVE MANY BANDITS, YOU SEE.
Everyone in the Bandit Family
HAND OVER YOUR VALUABLES TO US, DEAR OFFICERS.
SAO-TOME-SAN, STAY BACK!!
A- ARE YOU SURE, KO-JIRO-KUN!?
LOVE
YES!! PLEASE JUST SUPPORT ME FROM BEHIND, SAOTOME-SA...
turn
tremble
tremble

All Japan Costume Grand Prix: a Japanese TV show in which various people usually mimic something (Saotome was trying to mimic a tree).

He's a pro at changing subjects
A MER-CHANT?
THAT ASIDE, KOJIRO-KUN, IS IT TRUE THAT YOU'RE A "COMMUTING WIFE" OF...
I KNOW YOU'RE TRYING TO SAY IT LIKE IT'S A COOL WORD, BUT IT'S NOT.
Impa-ssible.
PWAH!
sigh

RUMOR HAS IT YOU'RE FAITHFULLY TAKING CARE OF HIM, EVEN GOING AS FAR AS COOKING HIS MEALS...
I've cooked your meals, darling~
Thank you honey~
His Highness
HE'S JUST A FRIEND AND I'M ONLY HELPING HIM!!
REAAALLY~~?
VOI~LA
I'M NOT LYING! THIS IS HIM!
It so happens I received this picture from him the other day
flap
LEMME SEE
!!?
W- WHY DID HE DRESS LIKE THIS..!?
He's totally spreading his legs like a chick.. But he's a BOY.
OH. THAT WAS JUST A COINCIDENCE.
R- RIGHT?? I'M SURE IT WAS!

ta~dah
WHAA AAAT!!?
USUALLY, HE'S CLOSE TO NAKED.
Did I mention that he's a super sadist?
IN OTHER WORDS, AN OFFICER LIKE YOU IS A HAPPY BUDDY OF A SUPER SADISTIC YOUNG MAN WHO'S ALSO AN EXHIBIT-IONIST...
Hmm
I'M SORRY! I'M TRULY SORRY!!!
BUT I'M TRYING TO GET HIM BACK ONTO THE RIGHT PATH!
TRUST ME!
OH. LOOKS LIKE WE'VE ARRI-VED
WOW...!!
SEE, THAT'S KENZAN-CHO.

AND IT'S BUSTLING HERE, TOO.
THE TOWN LOOKS LIKE IT'S ONE WITH THE MOUNTAIN!
THAT'S WHERE THEIR POLICE STATION IS.
LET'S GO THERE!!
THANKS FOR VISITING US ALL THE WAY FROM THE NEIGHBORING TOWN.
HOWDY. SO, YOU ARE SAOTOME-KUN.
GYAAAAA
I'M THE SENIOR POLICE OFFICER IN KENZAN POLICE STATION, YOKOYAMA.

EX-EXCUSE ME!
OI! WE HAVE GUESTS HERE! DON'T GO AROUND DRAGGING THAT THING!
!
I MIGHT BE KILLED...!!
drag
drag
HELP ME!! I'M NOT THE CULPRIT!!
UMM... A SECOND, KOJIRO-KUN.
TREE PEOPLE ...!?
pull
OH. IT'S ALRIGHT HE'S JUST ONE OF THE TREE PEOPLE.
nonchalant
WHAT WAS THAT!? YOU KNOW IT'S FORBIDDEN TO TORTURE SOMEONE INTO CONFESSION!
TAKE A LOOK
WHAT?
I'LL SHOW YOU ANOTHER KENZAN-CHO
TAP TAP
JUST FOLLOW ME.
yank
W- WHAT IS IT, SAO-TOME-SAN!?

VOOM
UWAH!
THE SMELL IS... AWFUL.
cough
IT'S KENZAN-CHO'S SLUM AREA.
THERE ARE TWO GROUPS IN KEN-ZAN-CHO.
THE ONE THAT CONTROLS AND LIVES IN THE WEALTHY DISTRICT: THE "FLOWER MIST CLAN".
AND THE ONES THAT ARE CONTROLLED AND LIVE IN THIS SLUM: THE "TREE PEOPLE"
THEY ARE DISCRIMINATED BECAUSE OF FLOWER MIST CLAN'S "BELIEF"
WHY ARE TREE PEOPLE THE ONES BEING CONTROL-LED...?

"FLOWER MIST CLAN" BELIEVES IN "FLOWER MIST RELIGION"
ONE OF THAT RELIGION'S TEACHINGS CLAIMS THAT "TREE PEOPLE WILL BRING CALAMITIES UPON THE PEOPLE OF FLOWER MIST CLAN"
WHICH EXPLAINS WHY FLOWER MIST CLAN DESPISES AND DISCRIMINATES TREE PEOPLE.

B- BUT! THAT'S A MERE SUPERSTITION, ISN'T IT?
WELL, THAT MIGHT BE TRUE TO US WHO DON'T BELIEVE IN FLOWER MIST RELIGION. BUT PEOPLE OF THE FLOWER MIST CLAN THINK OTHERWISE.
YOU SEE, HUMANS ARE CAPABLE OF COMMITTING EVEN THE CRUELEST ACT WHEN THEY BELIEVE THAT IT IS RIGHT.
MANY CONFLICTS AMONG HUMANS ARE BORN FROM THAT WAY OF THINKING.

STIL...!!
THOUGH UNLIKE IN THE PAST,
SOME PEOPLE OF THE FLOWER MIST CLAN TODAY DO THINK THAT THE TEACHING MIGHT BE A SUPERSTITION.
GYAAA!!
whip

LIFE SURE IS HANDY FOR FLOWER MIST CLAN MEMBERS WHO TREAT TREE PEOPLE AS SLAVES.
chukda
THEY FORCE TREE PEOPLE TO DO DIRTY AND TOUGH JOBS WHILE THEY THEMSELVES LIVE EFFORT-LESSLY...
SNAP IT!! KEEP DAWDLING AND THERE'LL BE NO FOOD FOR YOU!
HUH?
DASH
COME, KOJIRO-KUN.
PERFECT TIMING THEY'RE AT IT DOWN THERE.
NAAAH!!!
OH.
WE CAN'T FORGIVE THEM!!
RYU-GEN-SAMA!
RATTLE
RATTLE
RYU-GEN-SAMA!

NARUMI RYUGEN.
THE LEADER OF FLOWER MIST CLAN. SHE'S ALSO THE PRESIDENT OF FLOWER MIST RELIGION.
peek
AND THAT PERSON IS?
SHE IS A WOMAN!
YEAH. FOR GENERATIONS, THEY BELIEVE THAT THE POWER OF FLOWER MIST GOD LIES INSIDE THE ELDEST DAUGHTER OF NARUMI FAMILY.
SHE LOOKS LIKE SHE'S A GENTLE WOMAN.
AT A GLANCE, YES.
BUT WHEN IT COMES TO FLOWER MIST RELIGION, HER STRICTNESS IS UNRIVALED
I DON'T KNOW THE EXACT REASON BUT, 10 YEARS AGO SHE BANISHED HER OWN HUSBAND. SHE SAID THAT HE HAD VIOLATED THE TEACHINGS.
I SEE...

I PRAY THAT TODAY WILL BE ANOTHER BLISSFUL DAY FOR EVERYONE.
BE KIND AND THOUGHTFUL TOWARD TREE PEOPLE, WHO ARE CALLED THE PEOPLE OF HUMBLE ORIGINS.
WHAT? IS SHE SUPPORTING THE TREE PEOPLE?
NAH. THAT'S JUST HER MASK.
THAT'S RYUGEN-SAMA FOR US! HER BENEVOLENCE REACHES EVEN THE LOWLY TREE PEOPLE!
chatter
YEAH.
SEE? NOW PEOPLE'S INCLINATION TO DISCRIMINATE TREE PEOPLE HAS DEEPENED.
SHE KNOWS THAT SIMPLE SERMONS CAN'T IMPROVE THE STATUS QUO.
SHE PREACHES FOR THE SAKE OF RISING HER FAME IN THE EYES OF COMMON PEOPLE...
OH?
THAT UNIFORM.. ARE YOU A POLICE OFFICER FROM GENTO-CHO?
PARDON? OH, YES.
HOW DO YOU DO? I'M THE CLAN LEADER, NARUMI RYUGEN.
WEL-COME TO KENZAN-CHO.
AH... PLEASED TO MEET YOU. I'M SAOTOME MIZUHIKO.

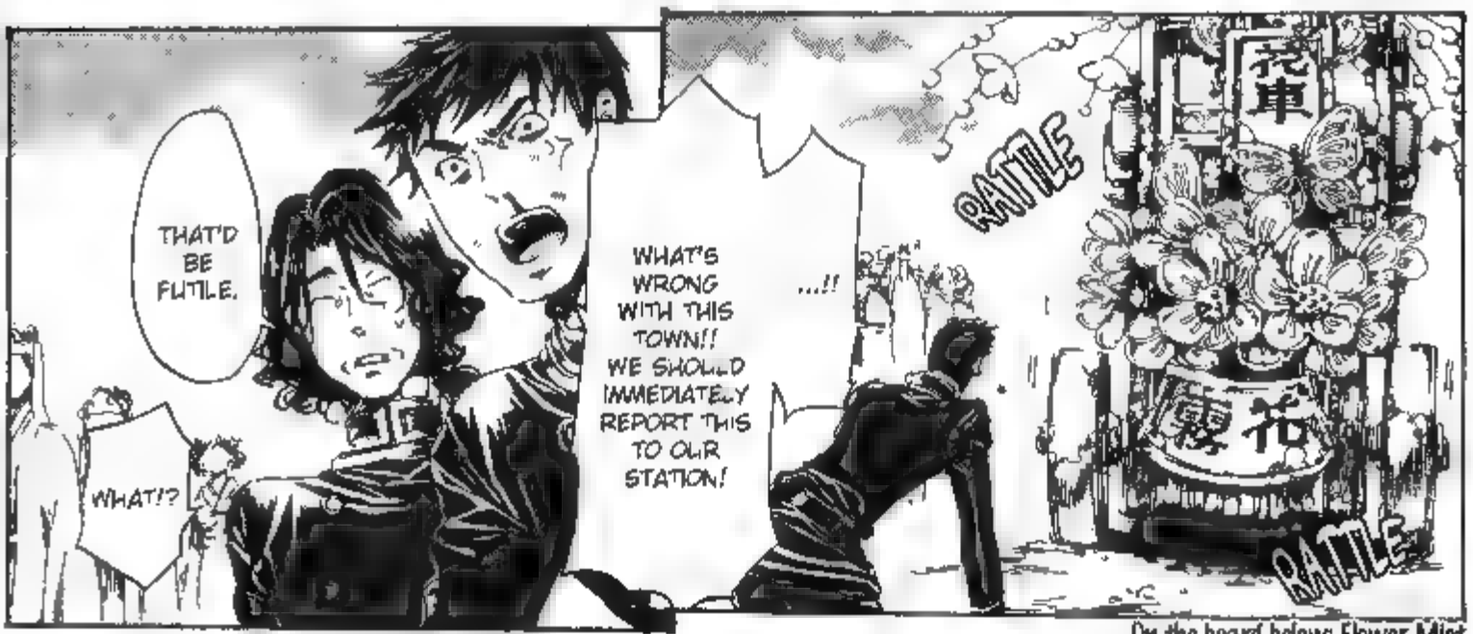
THESE ARE MY ELDEST DAUGHTER, MAKIYO AND MY SECOND DAUGHTER, HARUKO.
HARUKO WILL BE MY SUCCESSOR.
IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.
WHY, I THOUGHT ONLY THE ELDEST DAUGHTERS OF NARUMI FAMILY CAN INHERIT THE LEADERSHIP POSITION.
HARUKO IS A SPECIAL CHILD. WHEN SHE WAS BORN, GOD'S REVELATION WAS WITH HER.
OH, MY. I SEE YOU ARE WELL-INFORMED ABOUT OUR FAMILY
OH
IS THAT S-
MAY I!?

I HAVE DESIGNED A FORWARD-LOOKING PLAN FOR THAT.
OH, DEAR. OF COURSE...
smile
CHATTER..
RYUGEN-SAMA, CONTRARY TO YOUR WORDS EARLIER, A LOT OF PEOPLE HERE TREAT TREE PEOPLE TOO LIGHTLY!
ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT?
K- KO-JIRO-KUN!!
SNAP
WE MUST .. TAKE OUR TIME AND SLOWLY CHANGE..
EVERYONE'S AWARENESS CANNOT BE CHANGED THAT RAPIDLY.
...HOWEVER, THIS IS A PROFOUND PROBLEM DEEPLY ROOTED WITHIN OUR CULTURE.
WHO ARE YOU TRYING TO KID!!?
AND CALLING IT A "PRO-FOUND PRO-BLEM"!?
MAKING OTHER PEOPLE YOUR SLAVES BASED ON SOME SUPER-STITION

SAO-TOME-SAN! HURRY, MAKE YOUR ESCAPE!!
TURN
YOU IGNORANT INFIDELS!!
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, ASSHOLE!? HOW DARE YOU SPOKE LIKE THAT TO RYUGEN-SAMA!

Jojo pose: Google the cover art for Japanese version of Jojo's Bizarre Adventure Vol. 4

I DEEPLY APOLOGIZE ON BEHALF OF MY PEOPLE...!!
NO, IT'S FINE! HE CAN HANDLE THIS MUCH.
Aha haha
I HAVEN'T EVEN SAID ANYTHING YET SAO-TOME-SAN.
WELL THEN... I'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE MYSELF HERE.



On the board above: Flower Cart

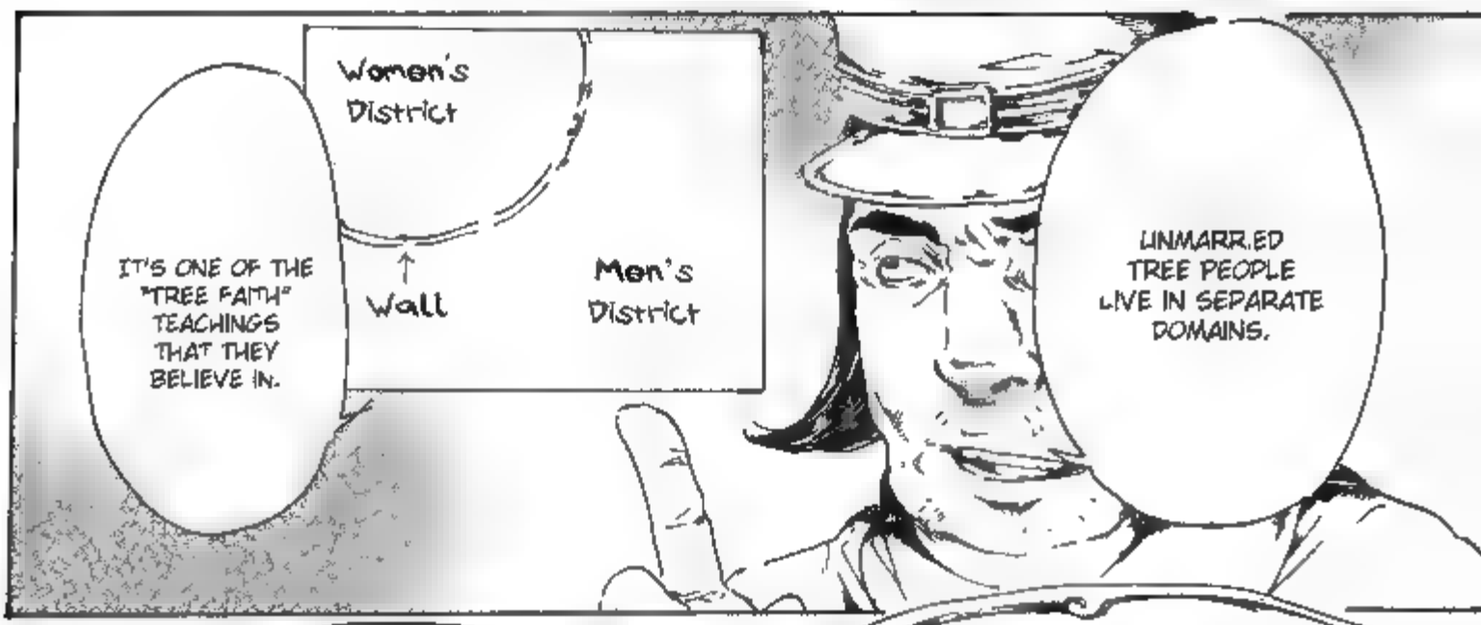
On the board below: Flower Mist

THE FLOWER MIST CLAN IS WEALTHY BECAUSE THEY MAKE TREE PEOPLE WORK HARD FOR THEM.
EVERY YEAR, THIS CLAN SENDS ILLEGAL "DONATION" TO OUR COUNTRY'S IMPORTANT PEOPLE.
...DO YOU GET IT NOW?
TREE PEOPLE ARE RECOG-NIZED AS SLAVES, BY *THIS COUNTRY*
twitch

Kenzan Police Station
dash
AH, KOJIRO-KUN!!
UGH...
JUST CONFESS ALREADY!! YOU DID IT, DIDN'T YOU!?
HEY, LET'S JUST BREAK ONE OF THIS GUY'S LEGS.
STOP TOR-TURING HIM NOW!!
FORCING SOMEONE TO CON-FESS BY TORTUR-ING THEM IS A CRIME!!
W- WAIT A MINUTE, KOJIRO-KUN!!
!!
BAM

94
!
I HOPE WE CAN RESOLVE THE MATTER PEACEFULLY WITH THESE !!
squeeze
uWAA AAHH ..!! I'M SORRY!
THOSE UNIFORMS... AH, I BET THEY'RE FROM GENTO-CHO.
WHO ARE THESE GUYS?
HOO...
I WILL INVESTIGATE THE CASE PROPERLY!! LET ME HANDLE IT!
EEEK!!
YOU EXPECT ME TO ACCEPT THESE!?
LIKE I NEEDED ANY OF THESE!! IS TODAY MOTHER'S DAY!?
Shoulder Massage Ticket
1 ticket for 30 min.
I shall massage your shoulders with all my heart
Pushy
But I'll do it with all my heart!
HELL YEAH!!
NO, WE'D RATHER NOT...
SENIOR POLICE OFFICER!
YOU BOY, WILL YOU INVESTIGATE THE CASE FOR US?
THAT SOUNDS GOOD. CAN I COUNT ON YOU?
SIR, ARE YOU SURE IT'S OKAY?
Whisper
I DON'T SEE WHY NOT.
It won't change anything anyway.

VERY WELL.
...THEN, PLEASE TELL ME EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS CASE.
THIS CASE IS ABOUT A SERIES OF MURDERS, OCCURRING WITHIN THE "WOMEN'S DISTRICT" INSIDE THE TREE PEOPLE'S RESIDENTIAL AREA.
Women's District
Men's District
...WOMEN'S DISTRICT?


UNMARRIED TREE PEOPLE LIVE IN SEPARATE DOMAINS.
Women's District
Wall
Men's District
IT'S ONE OF THE "TREE FAITH" TEACHINGS THAT THEY BELIEVE IN.

THE VICTIMS OF THIS CASE ARE FOUR WOMEN. THEIR AGES RANGE FROM CHILDHOOD TO 40S.
THE CORPSES WERE ALL NAKED JUDGING FROM THE SEXUAL ABUSE SCARS ON THEIR BODIES...
THE CULPRIT IS A MAN.

THIS IS A VERY UNLIKELY INCIDENT WITHIN THE WOMEN'S DISTRICT WHICH IS OFF-LIMITS FOR MEN.
THE FIRST CASE OCCURRED FIVE MONTHS AGO.
FROM THEN ON, THREE MORE WOMEN WERE KILLED
THE WOMEN'S RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT IS SURROUNDED BY A WALL AND
THE KEYS TO OPEN THE GATES OF THAT WALL ARE IN THE POSSESSIONS OF THE TREE PEOPLE'S CHIEF AND MYSELF.
HOWEVER, BOTH HE AND I HAVE ALIBI ON THE DAYS OF THE MURDER CASES.
...NOW, THIS MAN OVER HERE IS NANASHIRO TAICHI, A SUSPECT. HE'S 35 YEARS OLD AND LIVES ALONE.
HIS HOUSE IS LOCATED EXACTLY NEXT TO THE WOMEN'S RESIDENTIAL AREA..
Women's District

THIS GUY MADE A SECRET PASSAGE ON THE WALL NEXT TO HIS HOUSE!
AND HE HID THAT PASSAGE BEHIND THICK GRASS.
open
NO! IT WASN'T ME WHO MADE THAT PASS-AGE!!
I SWEAR I DIDN'T KNOW THAT IT WAS THERE!!
I'M SURE IT WAS THAT MAN'S DOING!! RECENTLY, I'VE SPOTTED A WEIRD MAN WANDERING AROUND MY HOUSE SEVERAL TIMES!!
HE IS NOT .. NORMAL!
NOT ANOTHER NONSENSE!
B- BUT IT'S THE TRUTH!
THERE'S NO WAY I'D ATTACK THE MAIDENS!!
FOLLOWING THE TEACH-INGS OF THE GOD OF TREE, WE, TREE PEOPLE MEN,
WILL NOT ASSOCIATE OURSELVES WITH MAIDENS UNTIL THE DAY OF OUR MARRIAGE!!

...THE TREE PEOPLE ARE ALSO PASSIONATE ABOUT THEIR FAITH, AREN'T THEY?
YEAH.
ACTUALLY, IT'S ALSO BECAUSE OF HIS FAITH THAT HE'S NOT GIVING UP DESPITE THE TORTURE HE'S RECEIVED.
GYAAA! GYAA!
...WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
TREE FAITH TELLS THEIR FOLLOWERS THAT "LAYING THE BLAME ON SOMEONE ELSE" IS THE WORST FORM OF EVIL.
PUTTING IT DIFFERENTLY, THERE IS NO DISGRACE WORSE THAN "BEING FALSELY ACCUSED".
...WELL THEN, I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR US TO EXAMINE THE VICTIMS' CORPSES.
AH. RIGHT.
THIS WAY
tap
tap
THIS IS THE MOST RECENT CORPSE.
IT'S BEEN ONE AND A HALF DAYS SINCE THE TIME OF HER DEATH

HMM... THE ROPE SCAR AROUND HER NECK SHOWS THAT SHE WAS STRANGLED TO DEATH.
WHERE ARE THE OTHER VICTIMS' CORPSES?
THEY'VE ALREADY STARTED DECAYING BUT THEIR CONDITIONS WERE ROUGHLY SIMILAR TO THIS CORPSE
I SEE...
BUT, JUDGING FROM THE SCARS ON THE FIRST VICTIM'S NECK, IT LOOKS LIKE SHE WAS STRANGLED WITH HANDS.
You can see finger marks.
VERY WELL
THAT ASIDE.
I CAN SEE THAT SHE WAS WOUNDED PRETTY CRUELLY.
THE CULPRIT MUST LOATHE "WOMEN" TO THEIR VERY CORE.
grin...
SEEMS LIKE IT WON'T TAKE US LONG TO SOLVE THIS CASE...
NEXT, WE'D LIKE TO ASK THE TREE PEOPLE'S CHIEF A FEW QUESTIONS.
OH. SURE.
What's with him...
perk

Naru-mi House-hold
He's creepy...
SAY, MOTHER
I THINK THERE'S SOME SENSE TO WHAT THE OFFICER THAT WE MET THIS AFTERNOON SAID.
IT'S TRUE THAT THE INCLINATION TOWARD DISCRI-MINATION AMONG OUR PEOPLE IS STRONG...
HA-RUKO!
YOU'RE TOO KIND!
KINDNESS IS IMPORTANT, BUT STERN-NESS IS ALSO A VITAL FEATURE OF LEADERSHIP
INSTEAD OF THINKING ABOUT TREE PEOPLE, FOCUS ON YOUR STUDY!
...YES.
step
step
For crying out loud...
Such an unpleasant world that we live in...
sigh

RYUGEN-SAMA, IT'S TIME FOR THE SOCIAL GATHERING WITH OUR PEOPLE.
OH DEAR, I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
I did say things that would make me look like I'm protecting the Tree People in front of non-believers...
But truth is, I feel filthy just from speaking about Tree People with my mouth!!
chatter
chatter
RYUGEN-SAMA, MY EYES ARE SWOLLEN.
MY, MY! THAT MUST BE HARD ON YOU! I'LL ARRANGE IT SO THAT YOU CAN MEET A GOOD DOCTOR.
RYUGEN-SAMA!
RYUGEN-SAMA, IT IS THANKS TO YOUR DONATION THAT THESE ORPHANED CHILDREN ARE DOING GREAT NOW
THANKS, RYUGEN-SAMA!
WE DREW A PORTRAIT OF YOU!

KYAA AHAHA
MY PEOPLE ARE MY CHILDREN!
OHO HO
THAT'S ALRIGHT.
Yahoo!
HEY! SPEAK FORMALLY TO RYUGEN-SAMA!!
who will bring us misfortune is... utter rubbish!!
Sympa-thizing with Tree People...
Seeing my people live peacefully like this
is my sole purpose of life
as the head of Narumi family.
HARU-KO!
tap
tap
tap

MAKIYO-ONEESAMA!
YOU SPOKE ABOUT TREE PEOPLE TO MOTHER, RIGHT?
IT'S USELESS, SHE WON'T LISTEN TO YOU.
TO MOTHER, FLOWER MIST CLAN PEOPLE ARE EVERY-THING.
YOU'LL ONLY GET SCOLDED
YES... YOU'RE RIGHT.

That kid... She s been acting strange.
I wonder why...

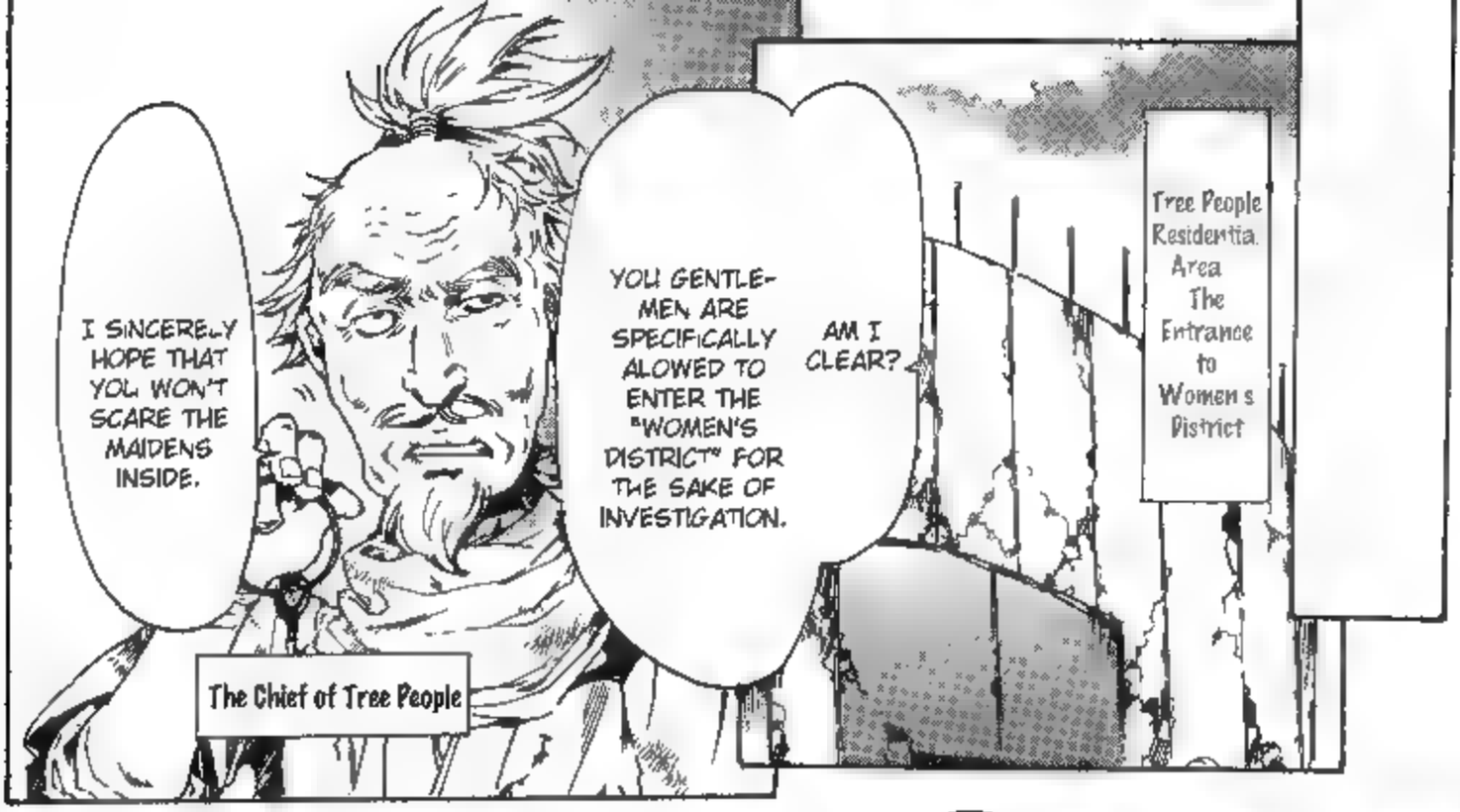
DASH
I'LL BE CAREFUL NEXT TIME.
...

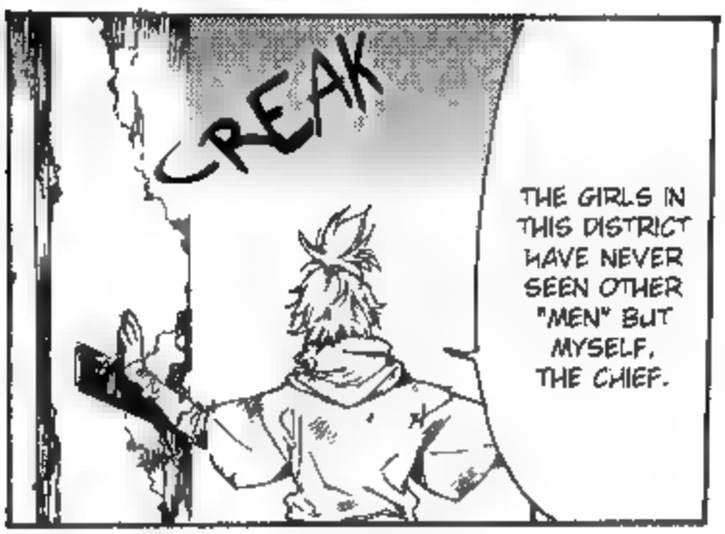
peek

Slide

step
step

grab
GLAD THAT YOU CAME TO MEET ME AGAIN TODAY!
THIS IS ONE OF THE FEW TIMES IN MY DAILY LIFE WHEN I FEE....
THRILLED.


Tree People Residential Area The Entrance to Women's District
YOU GENTLEMEN ARE SPECIFICALLY ALOWED TO ENTER THE "WOMEN'S DISTRICT" FOR THE SAKE OF INVESTIGATION.
AM I CLEAR?
I SINCERELY HOPE THAT YOU WON'T SCARE THE MAIDENS INSIDE.
The Chief of Tree People


CREAK
THE GIRLS IN THIS DISTRICT HAVE NEVER SEEN OTHER "MEN" BUT MYSELF, THE CHIEF.

W- WE GOT IT BUT...
IT'S NOT LIKE WE'LL DO ANY-THING.
click
click

KYAA
KYAA

MEN!
!!
KYAAA
flinch
THEY'RE SCARED BY THE MERE MENTION OF "MEN" EXCEPT MYSELF.
SO THAT'S THE DEAL...

GYAA!!
KYAA!!
W- WAIT! YOU TWO ARE FREAKING ME OUT!
APPARENTLY THE MAIDENS CAN TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A HANDSOME GUY AND A GEEZER.
DIE, HANDSOME GUYS! VANISH, HANDSOME GUYS!!
Shit! Screw youth!
S- SOMEHOW I COULD SENSE A NUANCE GAP BETWEEN THE SCREAMS FOR KOJIRO-KUN AND ME...
sob sob
Hmph
YOU KNOW, I UNDERSTAND WELL HOW GUYS YOUR AGE BEHAVE.
FuFuFu~
WE DIDN'T MEAN TO THOUGH? I'M JUST BLINDED BY YOUR DAZZLING YOUTH...
PERHAPS IT'S ALSO BECAUSE OF YOUR YOUTHFUL ENTHUSIASM THAT YOU'RE FRIENDS WITH A SUPER SADIST, NAKED GUY
SHALL I GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE?
KOJIRO-KUN'S FRIENDSHIP WITH THAT NAKED GUY IS PROBABLY DEEPER THAN THE NAKED STRAIT.
KOJIRO-KUN AND NAKEDNESS MIGHT BE INSEPARABLE FOR LIFE BUT A NAKED GUY WHO IS NAK-
STOP SAYING MY NAME AND "NAKED" ALTER-NATELY LIKE THAT!
And WHAT IS a naked strait?

WHAT ABOUT Y...
KYAA!!
WHAT ABOUT YOU THEN, LITTLE PRINCESS!?
grip
EEEK!!

DASH!
GYAAA!!
MY L TTLE PRINCESS! HOW ABOUT A CUP OF TEA WITH ME!?

NO FREAK-ING WAY!!
GUYS YOUR AGE BEHAVE LIKE THAT CORRECT?
Heh
Yeah!

SAOTOME
VS
CHIEF
WHACHACHACHA
WHA-TAAAA!!!

IT'S QUITE FAR FROM THE MAIN ROAD, HUH.
THIS IS THE PLACE WHERE THE MOST RECENT VICTIM WAS FOUND.

BUT OF COURSE WE'RE REALLY SORRY
RUMBLEEEE
DAMNED POLICEMEN, GET BACK TO YOUR WORK OR ELSE...
snap
snap

THIS IS IT.

YEAH. THESE FOOTSTEPS ARE LEFT BEHIND UNTOUCHED...
WE CAN SEE THESE FOOT-STEPS.
WE'RE LUCKY! LOOKS LIKE THE LAND HERE IS WET.
...!!
OF COURSE. BUT, DON'T YOU THINK THESE FOOTSTEPS ARE WAY TOO CLEAN?
THE ONLY FOOTSTEPS GOING OUT OF THE WOODS ARE THOSE OF THE MURDERER.
FROM THE MAIN ROAD WE CAN SEE FOOTSTEPS OF THE MURDERER AND THEIR VICTIM...
AFTER THEY FOUGHT BEHIND THE WOODS...
I HOPE THIS INFOR-MATION HELPS?
... WHAT!?
RIBBONS?
ALL VICTIMS GOT THEIR RIBBONS STOLEN.
AND THEN, I DON'T KNOW IF THIS WILL BE OF ANY USE BUT...

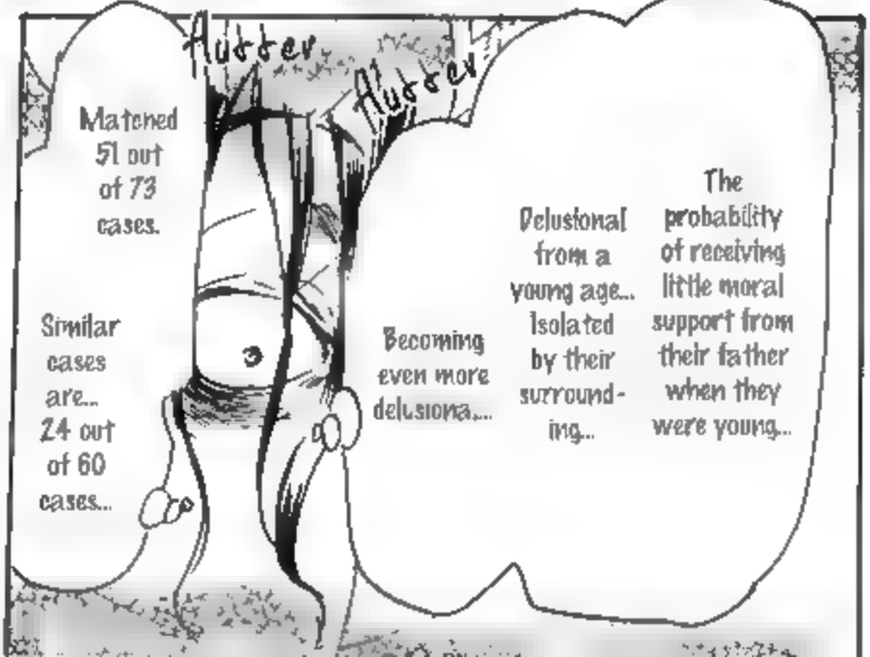
EVERY MAIDEN IN OUR TRIBE WEARS A RIBBON WITH THEIR NAME EMBROIDERED ON IT.
I SEE. THE RIBBONS WERE PROBABLY STOLEN BECAUSE THE CULPRIT IS COLLECTING THEM.
THAT IS A COMMON MOTIVE AMONG CRIMINALS.
IS THAT SO.
NEXT, CAN I ASK YOU TO SHOW US THE REST OF THE MURDER SCENES?
AL-RIGHT...
THE FIRST TWO MURDERS TOOK PLACE IN THE EAST SIDE...
AND THE REMAINING TWO MURDERS OCCURRED AT RANDOM SPOTS.
THIS IS THE FIRST VICTIM'S MURDER SCENE. WITH THIS, I'VE SHOWN YOU EVERY SCENE.
HMM... ONLY THIS MURDER SCENE IS CLOSE TO THE MAIN ROAD
Three hours later...

NO. THAT'S INCORRECT.
WE THINK THAT THIS MIGHT BE A CURSE FROM OUR GOD.
MOREOVER, NOBODY HEARD ANY SCREAM COMING FROM THE VICTIMS.
WHAT?
THEY'RE NOT RANDOM. IF WE CONNECT ALL SPOTS, WE'LL GET THE SYMBOL OF THE GOD OF TREE RELIGION.
SEE? IT'S THE SAME SHAPE AS THIS TATTOO.
THE CULPRIT CHOSE THE MURDER SCENES SO THAT IT'D BE HARD FOR US TO PINPOINT THE CULPRIT'S RESIDENCE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN...?
THE "FIRST MURDER" IS USUALLY CAUSED BY IMPULSE.
THUS, THE LOCATION OF THE FIRST MURDER IS OFTEN CLOSE TO THE CULPRIT'S RESIDENCE.
WHEN IT COMES TO SERIAL MURDER CASES, THE LOCATION OF THE FIRST MURDER IS IMPORTANT.
THE REASON IS THAT...

SERIAL KILLERS USUALLY
BECOME BETTER AT KILLING AS THEY MURDER MORE PEOPLE.
THEY DECIDED TO CHOOSE FARTHER PLACES TO COMMIT THE THIRD MURDER ONWARDS.
WHEN THE CULPRIT REALIZED THAT THE FIRST TWO MURDERS TOOK PLACE TOO CLOSE TO THEIR RESIDENCE...
THESE SERIAL MURDERS ARE CLEARLY DONE BY A "HUMAN"...
THEN... NANASHIRO IS THE CULPRIT
CLENCH
CLENCH
AND USING ROPES TO CHOKE THEIR VICTIMS.
BUT FROM THE SECOND CASE, THE CULPRIT BEGAN KILLING BEHIND THE WOODS
GYAHOOOO
Like so!
THE CULPRIT KILLED THE FIRST VICTIM WITH HANDS IN A PLACE THAT IS EASILY SPOTTED BY PEOPLE.
UHOHOHOO
CHOKE!
LET'S SEE..
IF IT'S NOT HIM, THEN WHO!?
HE'S INNOCENT
YOUR SUSPECT, NANASHIRO-SAN, DOES LIVE NEAR THE FIRST MURDER SCENE BUT...

ROAR
They might have a job but their career isn't advancing... The probability of living together with their parents...
Introverted... Extremely timid... Lack of emotions...
Matched 33 out of 35 cases. Their mother is overprotective or too strict...? Their parents let them do as they like?
Con-vulsive rage...
The possibility that the culprit is a young man from the middle to high class is likely...
The ages of the victims are random... Matched 59 out of 75 cases.

His eyes are moving rapidly.
HEY, IS HE OKAY?
YES.
SAOTOME-SAN IS ALWAYS LIKE THAT WHENEVER HE'S IN SERIOUS MODE.


flutter flutter
Matched 51 out of 73 cases.
Similar cases are... 24 out of 60 cases...
Becoming even more delusiona...
Delusional from a young age... Isolated by their surround-ing...
The probability of receiving little moral support from their father when they were young...

Huh...?
Are you serious?
turn
ALRIGHT, LET'S SEARCH FOR A YOUNG MAN WITH THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS.
THE CULPRIT MOST LIKELY LIVES IN THE FLOWER MIST CLAN RESIDENTIAL AREA, EAST SIDE.
HE'S FROM AT LEAST MIDDLE CLASS FAMILY AND IS ABOUT 10 TO AROUND 20 YEARS OLD, ALSO AN INTROVERT
HE LIVES TOGETHER WITH AN OVERPROTECTIVE OR AN OVERBEARING MOTHER. HIS FATHER IS EITHER DIVORCED FROM HIS MOTHER OR HAS LITTLE ROLE IN HIS UPBRINGING.
HE HAS NEVER HAD ANY NORMAL COMPANIONSHIP WITH WOMEN, A TIMID GUY. HE'S SLIM AND NOT EXACTLY STRONG PHYSICALLY HE HAS LITTLE FRIENDS, A LONE WOLF.
JUST BEFORE HE COMMITTED THE FIRST CRIME, HE EXPERIENCED A GREAT SHOCK.
H-HOW COME YOU'RE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THAT MUCH?
I'M A CRIME RESEARCHER. WHAT I SAID JUST NOW IS SIMPLY A STATISTICS-BASED GUESS.
ALSO, LOOKING FROM THE DEPTH AND SIZE OF THE FOOTSTEPS AS WELL AS THE FACT THAT THE SECOND MURDER ONWARDS WERE COMMITTED USING A ROPE, WE CAN SAY THAT THE KILLING PATTERN ISN'T THAT COMPLICATED
Oh..!! This man is..!!
SHOCK
Yes, It's HIM..!!
I only met him once a long time ago but...
He changed so much I didn't realize that it was him...!!

He's called "The Fog of Gento Police Station" !!
Like a fog, he's impossible to catch. He can't even wield a sword and he looks like a mere delicate man. But...
25 years ago
He was also famous as an astonishingly beautiful
Some times he spied as a woman
One time he disguised himself as a lover of a politician's wife
spied wherever he went He's said to posses rich amount of illegal information...
In fact, he interviewed countless criminals to collect data and
During that time, he visited this police station once...
My colleagues and I all went to see him...
But he's a guy! It kinda ticks me off!
Wow! He's looking this way! So pretty!
Man. He's cute!

I, never in my wildest dreams, imagined that he would turn into a geezer like this...!!
What was thinking when thought he was kinda hot!?

YOU DID A SPLENDID JOB, SAOTOME-SAN!
NOW WE'RE MUCH CLOSER TO CAPTURING THE CULPRIT!
YEAH. AND WE'LL GET EVEN CLOSER TO HIM FROM NOW
HOWEVER, THERE'S ONE FINAL THING WE MUST DO.
HUH?
whisper
But this is bad...!!
There's a shady story that comes with "The Fog of Gento Police Station"!

C- CAN WE DO THAT, REALLY!?
YES. OF COURSE.
KOJIRO-KUN,
I HAVE ALREADY PINNED DOWN THE CRIMINAL.
...by himself!"
he can destroy an entire town...
"That fog envelopes everything quietly...

Part

The Fifteenth Story

THE FOG OF GENTO POLICE STATION

I HAVE ALREADY PINNED DOWN THE CRIMINAL.

FROM NOW ON WE'LL BE TAKING CARE OF THINGS ON OUR OWN!

DASH

H-HEY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING!!

WE-L, LET'S GET MOVING, KOJIRO-KUN!!

WHAT...?!

SO...?

Narumi Household

...bad feeling about this!!

I somehow get a...

YOU SAID THAT YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO DISCUSS WITH US.

WHAT IS IT?

TAKE A LOOK AT THESE, PLEASE.

S-STOP SAYING NONSENSE ...!

ARREST MAKIYO-SAN, THE CULPRIT OF THOSE MURDERS.

WHAT?!

YES IN RELATION TO THE SERIAL KILLINGS OF THE TREE PEOPLE MAIDENS, WE'RE HERE TO

THESE ARE THE RIBBONS OF THE VICTIMS.

THAT MAID SAID THAT THESE RIBBONS WERE FOUND IN MAKIYO-SAN'S ROOM.

THIS MORNING, ONE OF YOUR MAIDS BROUGHT THESE TO ME.

WHAT!?

WHAT!? THEN YOU CAN'T USE THOSE RIBBONS AS PROOF!

NOW THAT'S SOMETHING I CAN'T TELL YOU.

HOW DARE SHE MADE UP A STORY LIKE THAT!!

WHO IS THIS MAID!?

.....!!!

BECAUSE THE NAMES ON THOSE RIBBONS ARE WRO--

GASP

N-NO!! THIS CAN'T BE TRUE!

NOW, COME WITH ME TO THE POLICE STATION.

BUT, THESE RIBBONS ARE UNDENIABLY THE REAL THINGS.

YANK

DEAR ME...

I WONDER *HOW* DID YOU KNOW?

NAMES YOU SAID?

WHAT?

!!.....

IF BY ANY CHANCE, THE REAL RIBBONS OF THE VICTIMS ARE THERE...

MAY I SEARCH YOUR ROOM NOW?

I SIMPLY BOR-ROWED THESE RIBBONS FROM THE TREE PEOPLE MAIDENS.

WHAT I SAID BEFORE WAS INDEED A LIE.

THESE RIBBONS DON'T BELONG TO THE VICTIMS.

WAIT, NOW.

GRAB

FWIP

S-SHUT UP! JUST GO HOME! YOU'RE IRRITATING ME!!

PARDON ME.

FLOP

!!

AS I THOUGHT... YOU ARE...

A MAN.

THERE WAS SOMETHING THAT CAME TO MY MIND WHEN I SAW THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE MURDERER AND HIS VICTIMS-- THEY WERE TOO NEAT.

!!.....

SO WHY DID THE VICTIMS CALMLY FOLLOW A MAN WHOM THEY BARELY KNEW?

TREE PEOPLE MAIDENS ARE FRIGHT-ENED BY THE MERE MENTION OF "MEN"

NO SIGNS OF THE VICTIMS BEING FORCED TO COME ALONG EITHER.

NO SIGNS OF FIGHTS AND

WE CAN DISRE-GARD THE FIRST ANSWER.

THE ONLY MAN THAT THE MAIDENS KNOW WELL IS THE CHIEF. BUT HE HAS AN ALIBI SO...

1. "THE CULPRIT IS A MAN THAT THEY KNEW WELL" AND 2. "THE CULPRIT IS A MAN WHO DRESSES LIKE A WOMAN".

THERE ARE TWO POSSIBLE ANSWERS TO THAT QUES-TION.

.....

IT WAS YOU WHO OPENED A PASSAGE ON THE WALL

TO THE WOMEN'S DISTRICT NEAR NANASHIRO-SAN'S HOUSE, CORRECT?

THIS MANSION IS ALSO CLOSE TO THE HOUSE OF OUR ORIGINAL SUSPECT, NANASHIRO-SAN.

IF YOU WERE TRULY HER ELDEST "DAUGHTER",

SHE'D HAVE CERTAINLY MADE YOU THE NEXT LEADER OF THE CLAN.

RYUGEN-SAMA IS A VERY STRICT WOMAN.

HOW... DID YOU KNOW THAT I'M A MAN?

OH. THAT'S BE-CAUSE...

PUTTING EVERYTHING INTO CONSID-ERATION, THE IMAGE OF THE CULPRIT BEING MAKIYO-SAN BECAME CLEARER TO ME...

AND SO I ARRIVED TO THIS CONCLU-SION.

THAT STATE-MENT WAS SO UNREAL-ISTIC, IT SOUNDED LIKE A LIE.

INSTEAD, SHE SAID, "GOD'S REVELATION CAME WITH HARUKO WHEN SHE WAS BORN".

ENOUGH...

HOW ABOUT WE HAVE A LOOK INTO MAKIYO-SAN'S ROOM THEN?

COULD YOU PLEASE STOP SPOUTING SUCH A FOOLISH THEORY!?

...!?

I JUST WANTED TO KILL THEM. THAT'S ALL.

IT'S TRUE.

I DID KILL THOSE WOMEN.

EVEN YOU, MOTHER, THINK THAT THEY'RE LOWER THAN LIVESTOCK, DON'T YOU?

SIGH...

IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL, REALLY. THEY'RE ONLY TREE PEOPLE.

WITH YOUR POWER, MOTHER.

HMPH

YOU'LL COVER THIS CASE FOR ME, RIGHT?

MA-KIYO!!

WH-

S-
STOP IT,
MAKIYO!!

IT WILL BRING SHAME TO THE NAME OF THE NOBLE NARUMI FAMILY.

YOU'LL LOSE YOUR CURRENT SOCIAL STATUS.

IF WORD GETS OUT THAT I'M A MURDERER,

OKAY, I GOT IT... MAKIYO.

...YES.

.....

...HUH?

YOU'RE NOT A CRIMINAL, DO YOU HEAR ME?

YOU WERE JUST FOLLOWING THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN TO KILL FOUR DIRTY TREE PEOPLE.

LISTEN WELL. YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE REALIZED IT, BUT THE TRUTH IS...

!!

SO THAT'S THE GIST OF IT. PLEASE RETREAT, OFFICERS.

WHO ARE YOU PLAN-NING TO BLAME!?

WA- IF IT'S NOT YOUR SON, THEN,

THIS NARUMI FAMILY, RIGHT?

A SINNER COULDN'T HAVE BEEN BORN INTO

BUT IF I WERE TO EXPLAIN THIS TO IGNORANT COMMON PEOPLE, I DON'T THINK THEY'D UNDER-STAND.

WHAT HE DID WAS NOT A CRIME.

MAKIYO WAS JUST FOLLOWING GOD'S VOICE.

AND CALL THIS CASE RESOLVED.

I WANT TO EXECUTE YOUR ORIGINAL SUSPECT, THAT TREE PEOPLE MAN, AS THE CRIMINAL.

SO, LET US MAKE A NOBLE SACRI-FICE.

I'M JUST DIRECTING MAKIYO'S ROLE FROM THE CURIOUS EYES OF IGNORANT COMMONERS TOWARDS THAT MAN...

MOTHER...

YOU'RE WRONG. MAKIYO HAS FULFILLED HIS MISSION.

WH-WHAT THE HELL!?

ARE YOU PLANNING TO SACRIFICE AN INNOCENT MAN!?

I SIMPLY WANTED TO DISHONOR *AND* KILL THOSE WOMEN.

I DIDN'T HEAR SUCH A THING AS "GOD'S VOICE".

I was a man.

When she finally gave birth to me...

Mother had not been blessed with any child for years.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO END THIS CASE THAT WAY, I WON'T BE SATISFED.

The Narumi Family can only be led by women...

Mother thought that she wouldn't be able to give birth to a second child.

So she raised me as a woman.

Mother gave birth to Haruko.

I also went through tough training.

Just as I'd always been told to, I pretended to be a girl and was not able to make friends.

Yet, one day...

Mother celebrated her birth by holding a festival for a month.

And I became a useless existence.

.....

MAKIYO, CONTINUE LIVING AS A WOMAN.

WE WOULD LOSE THEIR TRUST.

IF OUR PEOPLE KNEW THAT WE'VE BEEN HIDING YOUR GENDER,

DO YOUR BEST NOT TO LEAVE YOUR ROOM.

MAKIYO, ASIDE FROM ATTENDING THE FLOWER MIST CLAN CEREMONIES,

.....

IF BY SOME CHANCE HIS GENDER IS REVEALED, IT WON'T BE A SIMPLE LAUGHING MATTER!!

OF COURSE HE WON'T ATTEND THE PARTY!!

ABOUT MAKIYO-SAMA'S ATTEND-ANCE IN HARUKO-SAMA'S UPCOMING BIRTHDAY PARTY .

MAKIYO, STAY AT HOME.

WE'LL BE GOING ON A SIGHT-SEEING TRIP.

.....

CONGRA-TULATI-ONS!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HARUKO-SAMA!

A HA HA

My gentle father was the only one who understood me well...

FATHER ...

THAT'S NOT TRUE! MAKIYO, YOU'RE A PRECIOUS CHILD!

...Am I... an unwanted child...?

THE NEXT ...

MAKIYO, DON'T ATTEND THE CLAN GATHERING.

MAKIYO WON'T HAVE HIS BIRTHDAY PARTY AGAIN THIS YEAR.

And she made light of me even more.

But, mother exiled him with a charge of "proposing the idea to set Tree People free".

I always... day-dreamed.

THIS IS ALL FOR THE SAKE OF OUR PEOPLE. THERE'S NO OTHER WAY, NOW IS THERE?

MAKIYO, IF POSSIBLE, TRY TO ALWAYS STAY LOW.

all "women" who have treated father and me with contempt.

Of tormenting, dishonoring, and killing...

A FIANCE ? .. MINE ?

... WHAT?

DON'T YOU THINK IT'S DISGRACEFUL FOR A CHILD OF NARUMI FAMILY TO BE UNMARRIED AT SUCH A MATURE AGE?

YES. HE IS SAKAMOTO MIKIO-SAN.

BUT EVERY SINGLE TIME, I'D RETURN TO MY SENSES.

I HAD ALWAYS WANTED TO DO THOSE THINGS.

UNTIL THAT DAY.

YOU KNOW, *MEN WHO DRESS LIKE WOMEN.*

WHISPER

I... LIKE PEOPLE LIKE YOU.

BE AT EASE. I'VE BEEN INFORMED ABOUT YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES, MAKIYO-SAN.

.....

.....

TREMBLE
TREMBLE
.....
I SIMPLY VENT THAT ANGER ON TREE PEOPLE WOMEN, WHO ARE WORTH LESS THAN LIVESTOCK.
WHAT LIVES IN ME IS ONLY ANGER TOWARDS YOU AND THIS WORLD'S WOMEN.
YES, YES.
PUNCH
JUST GET OUT!!
YES?
...GET OUT...
I'LL EXECUTE THAT MAN!!
AND THAT WILL BE THE END!!
LET ME TELL YOU!! DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME TRYING TO MAKE THIS SCANDAL PUBLIC!!
I CAN STIFLE IT QUICKLY! MY POWER IS IMMENSE IN THIS TOWN!!

HMMM ...

AT THIS RATE, NANASHIRO-SAN WILL BE EXECUTED TOMORROW.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO NOW...?

LA LA LA

SAY WHAT ...!?

YEAH. LET'S GET OUT OF THIS TOWN TOMOR-ROW!

WE CAN'T GO AGAINST HER POWER ANY MORE THAN THIS.

LET'S JUST GIVE UP!

.....

FORGIVE ME, MASTER.

WALK FASTER!! YOU'RE ONE OF THE TREE PEOPLE, RIGHT!

SHE SURE IS.

WHY, OUR LITTLE LADY IS SO GOOD AT EDUCATING TREE PEOPLE.

YOU!! DON'T TALK BACK TO YOUR MASTER!

glance

IF YOU WANT TO LET GO OF THIS CASE, I'LL KEEP GOING BY MYSELF, SAOTOME-SAN.

I... CAN'T FORGIVE RYUGEN.

NOR CAN I FORGIVE THIS TOWN.

WHAT KIND OF GAME IS THAT!! SOUNDS LIKE SOME-THING THAT WOULD GET ON MY NERVES!!

• He would recklessly say "Mother don't enter my room without my permission!"

• He would start learning guitar out of the blue.

• During swimming class or body measurement, he'd hold his stomach in all the time.

• He'd wish he could get into the bath used by Ayari.

T/N. Ayuri the name of Kojiro's younger sister

NOW, NOW. FORGET ABOUT THAT AND LET'S PLAY "WHAT WOULD KOJIRO-KUN MOST LIKELY DO DURING HIS PUBERTY?" GAME ONCE WE'RE BACK IN THE HOTEL!!

BRAVO

The next day...

I BELIEVE IN YOU, SAOTOME-SAN!!

WHAT THE!! YOU CAN'T DO THAT, SAOTOME-SAN!!

OK! LET'S RETURN TO THE HOTEL AND LAZE AROUND WITH ALL OUR MIGHT!!

I COMMAND YOU AS YOUR SUPE-RIOR! REJECT PLAYING THIS GAME AND YOU'LL BE FIRED!

YAHOO!!

HEY.

rustle

HOW COULD YOU! JUST A FEW MORE HOURS AND NANASHIRO-SAN WILL BE EXECUTED!!

'COURSE WE WILL~~~

WE WON'T JUST CLIMB THIS MOUN-TAIN AND GO HOME, WILL WE!?

RUSTLE

YOU GUYS ARE THE POLICE OFFICERS FROM GENTO POLICE STATION, RIGHT?

SO YOU GUYS DID COME.

HUH!?

WHAT ...

DID YOU THINK RYUGEN WOULD LET US GO HOME ALIVE AFTER KNOWING THE TRUTH?

SAO-TOME-SAN! RUN!!

There are too many enemies this time!!

STEP STEP

We're in a pinch.

SFX: SHOOOF

YOU'RE PISSING ME OFF!!

YEAH! I'M AL-READY RUN-NING!!

DRAW

UGH...

GRIT GRIT

SWISH

CLANG CLANG CLANG

SFX: SLASH

Uh-oh! There are too many of them!

SFX: CLANG CLANG

I can't handle them alone!

GYAH!!

EEE-EK!!

YOU!! STOP RIGHT THERE!

WHOOSH...

Saotome-san!!

Please run as far as you can!!

CHARGE

DASH

CLANG

CLANG

Some of them are going after Saotome-san!!

!!?

THUD!

UGH!

TRIP

!!

ROAR

DIE!!

AH.

FWIP

fwoosh

CLINK

WHAT ON EARTH ...

WHAT!?

WOBBLE

NGH!!

SFX: BAM

UGH!

SFX: WHAM X 4

SFX: CHARGE

YOU SON OF A...!!

SCREECH

WOBBLE

TICK!!

GRUNH!

TURN

SNAP

PULL

SFX: SLAP

UGH!!!

TOSS

WHO IS... THIS OLD MAN!?

SFX: SMACK

WHAT?

STAGGER

I CAN BARELY PERFORM SWORDPLAY, BUT...

HUH?!

GRIP

GRIP

HUH?

!?

SFX: BAM

!!!

FLAP

STAND

SPURT

GAHH!!

SWAP

I'M GOOD AT MARTIAL ARTS.

OH...

YES... WE...

TWITCH

RUN

SAO-TOME-SAN!!

ARE YOU HURT!?

THEY WERE TRYING TO CAPTURE ME, BUT THEY STUMBLED UPON THAT BUMP INSTEAD

AND THEY FELL PERFECTLY JUST LIKE THAT...

HUH!? JUST HOW LUCKY YOU CAN GET...!!

IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR THE TREE PEOPLE TO BEGIN THEIR PROTEST.

YES?

IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR THEM TO START.

W-WELL! WHY DON'T WE GET GOING NOW??

HM? BUT... ALL OF THEM LOOKED LIKE THEY WERE BADLY HURT BY A BLUNT WEAPON...

Kinda gross

IT'S ALSO BECAUSE TREE PEOPLE DESPISE THOSE WHO "LAY THE BLAME ON SOMEONE ELSE".

THAT MUST RAISE THE CHIEF'S SUSPICION.

YET, NANASHIRO-SAN IS SUDDENLY SCHEDULED FOR AN EXECUTION TODAY.

THE CHIEF OF THE TREE PEOPLE MUST HAVE BEGAN TO THINK THAT NANASHIRO-SAN IS INNOCENT.

YESTERDAY, AFTER HEARING MY HYPOTHESIS REGARDING THE MURDERS,

YOU'LL ANSWER IT, YES?

I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU.

EEEK!!

HEY, YOU.

KNOCK

!

I SEE! THANK YOU!

WE'VE KILLED THOSE POLICE OFFICERS!!

!!

RYUGEN -SAMA!!

TAP TAP

FIDGET FIDGET

They're late...

WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU...!!

TAP TAP TAP

HEY!!

heave

WHAT!?

HM?

SLIDE

SFX: THUD

!!

SLIP

GYAA!

WHAT...?

LOOK AROUND.

UNFORTUNATELY, WE'RE ALIVE.

Y-YOU GUYS ARE...

SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD...!

GOOD DAY~~~

TREE PEOPLE'S RESIDENTIAL AREA?

IS THIS THE...

THE TREE PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW IF NANASHIRO-SAN REALLY IS THE CULPRIT OF THIS CASE.

YUP. RIGHT NOW, A DISCORD IS GOING ON BETWEEN THE TREE PEOPLE WHO ARE LED BY THEIR CHIEF AND THE POLICE FORCE OVER THERE.

THEY WON'T REALIZE IT EVEN IF SOMETHING HAPPENS HERE.

IN OTHER WORDS, THE POLICE FORCE IS TOO OCCUPIED WITH THE DISCORD AT THE MOMENT.

THOSE WHO REMAIN HERE ARE CHILDREN AND ELDERLY PEOPLE WHO CAN'T JOIN IN THE VIOLENT DISCORD.

.....!!!

IT'S *THIS*, *YOU TWO-FACED BITCH!!*

YANK

!?

WHAT'S YOUR POINT...

DON'T YOU DARE SPEAK ABOUT GOD, INFIDELS!! YOU WILL ONLY DIRTY THEM!

THE FILTHY ONE IS YOU, WOMAN!! YOU HAVE BLASPHEMED GOD!

STOP IT!! DON'T TOUCH ME! YOU'RE FILTHY!!

YANK

YANK

EH!? WHAT ARE YOU...

RYUGEN-SAMA.

HERE, YOU ARE THE "INFIDEL",

THE "GOD" THEY ARE REFERRING TO IS THE GOD OF TREE FAITH.

IN CASE YOU MIS-UNDER-STAND,

...WHAT?!

PUSH

IT IS A SIN THAT DESERVES THE STRICTEST PUNISHMENT.

"LAYING THE BLAME ON SOMEONE ELSE".

PULL

AND THE HEAVIEST SIN BASED ON TREE FAITH IS...

.....!!

HOW DARE YOU LAY THE BLAME ON ONE OF OUR CHILDREN!

THAT THE REAL CULPRIT IS APPARENTLY YOUR CHILD.

THAT OFFICER TOLD US EVERYTHING!

I CAN'T FORGIVE YOU FOR OPPRESSING MY PEOPLE.

I HAVE TREE PEOPLE BLOOD RUNNING IN MY VEINS.

YOU'RE WRONG.

Y...YOU!! WHO ARE YOU!!

NONE OF THIS HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOU!

SFX: CHEER

IT'S TIME FOR GOD'S JUDG-MENT!!

SLAY THIS HEAVY SINNER WITH THE AXE OF JUS-TICE!!

GRAB

HUH!!?

DON'T PUNISH ME!!

B- BUT WAIT!!

THE ONE WHO MUR-DERED THOSE MAIDENS IS MAKIYO!!

mutter

SO IT'S TRUE...

OH...

MAKIYO IS THE MUR-DERER?

DID YOU JUST CONFESS THAT...

SFX: SWING

THAT'S WHAT THE GOD OF YOUR RELIGION CLAIMS!!

QUIT FORCING THAT BELIEF ON OTHERS!!

YOU HAVE BLAMED A CRIME ON SOMEONE ELSE.

BUT THIS IS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MATTER.

ACCORDING TO OUR RELIGION, THAT IS A HEAVY SIN, SO...

S-STOP!!

PAUSE

HAVEN'T YOU ALWAYS BEEN DOING...

THE EXACT SAME THING?

.....!!!

TREE PEOPLE'S SMALL POPULATION, AND FOR YEARS HAVE BEEN FORCING THAT TEACHING ONTO THEM?

NOW, AREN'T YOU GUYS THE ONES WHO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF

HOWEVER, SINCE TREE PEOPLE BELIEVE IN TREE FAITH, THAT TEACHING IS UNRELATED TO THEM.

IT'S THE FLOWER MIST RELIGION TEACHING WHICH DECLARES THAT TREE PEOPLE BRING MIS-FORTUNES.

YOU CAN'T BE THE ONLY ONE ABSOLUTE.

THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE SIDE BY SIDE WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT FROM YOUR OWN CLAN.

.....!!!

IS NOT ALWAYS RIGHT.

THE WORLD THAT YOU BELIEVE IN...

N-NO MORE...!!!

YOU FORCED HIM TO HIDE HIS GENDER. YOU DECEIVED YOUR PEOPLE...

YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE ALWAYS RIGHT. YOU DON'T EVEN PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR SON'S FEELINGS.

THE ONE WHO PUSHED MAKIYO UNTIL HE BECAME LIKE THAT WAS UNMISTAKABLY YOU.

LET'S BE FRANK. YOU DON'T HAVE SUCH A THING AS "GOD'S POWER".

SFX: BAWLING

NO, WE'RE NOT.

I WON'T EXECUTE THAT MAN WHO BELONGS TO YOU!

NOW ARE YOU SATIS-FIED!?

F- FINE, I GOT IT!!

I UN-DER-STAND!

I ADMIT THAT MAKIYO IS THE MURDERER SO PLEASE STOP!!

WE DON'T WANNA BE CONTROLLED BY A DECEITFUL WOMAN LIKE YOU ANYMORE.

SET US FREE.

!!!

AND ON THIS ONE, A DECLARATION OF TREE PEOPLE'S INDEPENDENCE. SIGN BOTH PAPERS.

RIGHT. THEN, PLEASE WRITE THAT YOU'LL CANCEL NANASHIRO-SAN'S EXECUTION AND ADMIT MAKIYO-SAN'S CRIME ON THIS PAPER.

NOW! TIME TO WIPE THIS OFF.

H-has he really...?

GRIN

...WHAT'S WITH THESE FULLY PREPARED MATERI-ALS...

HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF ASKING ME TO DO THIS FROM THE BEGIN-NING...?

WHAT!?

RUB

RUB

Yeah, that's right! I just wanted to make my acting more convincing.

Plus, frankly I don't belong to any religion.

YOU'RE NOT ONE OF THE TREE PEOPLE!?

YOU SWIN-DLER!!

UNBE-LIEV-ABLE!

YOU ARE ALL LIES!!

FROM THE BE-GINNING UNTIL THE VERY END...

YOU... YOU'RE MESSED UP!!

WELL, I WISH YOU GOOD HEALTH!

I AM A POLICE OFFICER.

OH, NO! SUCH A SCANDAL-OUS WORD!

H-HEY!! THIS IS DANGER-OUS!!

OFFICER.

HE-NE

STEP

YOU'RE OUR POLICE STATION'S STRATE-GIST, INDEED!

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU EVEN AIMED FOR THE LIBERA-TION OF TREE PEOPLE!

YOU'RE INCRED-IBLE, SAOTOME-SAN!

PUNISH-ING MOTHER.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR...

!!

HARU-KO-SAN...!!

I UNDER-STOOD THE ENTIRE CIRCUM-STANCES.

YESTERDAY, I OVER-HEARD THE ARGUMENT BETWEEN MOTHER AND YOU GENTLE-MEN.

YES?

BUT THAT IS ONLY NATU-RAL. IT'S ALSO ONLY NATURAL FOR THE TREE PEOPLE TO BE LIBERATED.

I'M SURE NARUMI FAMILY WILL LOSE ITS DIGNITY AFTER THIS

IT'S ONLY NATURAL FOR ONEE-SAMA WHO COMMIT-TED A CRIME AND MOTHER WHO TRIED TO HIDE IT...

TO BE CON-VICTED.

WHAT?!

SINCE HE WAS BAN-ISHED 10 YEARS AGO.

IN FACT, MY FATHER HAS BEEN LIVING IN TREE PEOPLE'S RESIDENTIAL AREA

I DO NOT.

HUM? DON'T YOU HAVE ANY SENSE OF DISCRIMINA-TION TOWARDS TREE PEOPLE?

BUT I KNEW MOTHER WOULDN'T LISTEN TO ME.

I HATE THE DISCRIMI-NATION TOWARDS TREE PEOPLE.

HE ALWAYS SAYS THAT "TREE PEOPLE ARE ALL GOOD PEOPLE!"

FATHER →

HE COMES TO SE-CRETLY VISIT ME SOMETIMES.

TOGETHER WITH THE TREE PEOPLE'S CHIEF, I WILL CREATE A TOWN WHERE WE CAN ACCEPT EACH OTHER.

NOW IT'S MY TURN TO LEAD FLOWER MIST CLAN.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR OPENING MOTHER'S EYES.

I AGREE.

IT'S REASSURING TO KNOW THAT YOU'RE HERE.

WE'LL BE THERE IN NO TIME. KEEP IT UP, SAOTOME-SAN!

OH, I DON'T WANT TO WALK ANYMORE ...

HAAAA... I'M *HON-ESTLY* TIRED THIS TIME--

IT COULD *NOT* BE!!

COULD IT BE THAT... YOU EVEN PLANNED TO HAVE ME ANGRY AND TACTLESSLY ASK FOR A PERMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE CASE?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

BUT... SOMEHOW, EVERYTHING REALLY JUST HAPPENED ACCORDING TO YOUR PREDICTION, SAOTOME-SAN.

OH, GEEZ. I'VE HAD ENOUGH.

...is what he said. But while saying that, Saotome-san...

WHOOSH

WHOOSH

LET'S GO HOME!! I WANNA LAZE AROUND!!

YES, YES.

I'M ALREADY OLD! I HAVE NO PHYSICAL STRENGTH!

I HATE BEING TIRED!!

...looked far off into the distance and smiled.

I noticed that expression of his.

!!

STEP

SAO-TOME!!

Saotome-san is indeed very hard...

to understand.

ARE YOU... WORRIED ABOUT ME...?

DROP

HA... HARI-KUN... ARE YOU PER-HAPS...

S-SENIOR POLICE OFFI-CER!!

HARI-KUN!!

DON'T YOU THINK THAT YOU TOOK TOO LONG TO RETURN!? WHAT HAVE YOU GUYS BEEN DOING!!

I'M NOT!! I THOUGHT YOU MUST HAVE DONE SOME-THING WRONG AND THAT'S WHY YOU WERE AFRAID OF COMING BACK!!

These are tears of friendship!

HARI-KUN... !!

STOP CRYING! YOU'RE GROSS!

HARI-KUN! I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG THIS TIME~~~

IT HURTS!!

Even the magnificent Saotome-san has his own weakness, huh...

DRAG

DRAG

Walk faster!! A member of the Mountain Climbing Club doesn't need a rod!!

YOU DIDN'T DO SOME-THING THAT IS NOT MEANT TO BE PUBLIC AGAIN, DID YOU!?

YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOUR LIMIT IS!

WHAT?!

The next day...

HMM... VERY WELL.

S-SORRY, SHIRO-KUN!! THERE WERE SO MANY THINGS GOING ON SO I...!!

I ASKED YOU TO BUY IT AS A SOUVENIR FOR ME!!

YOU FORGOT TO BUY "KENZAN-CHO DANGO", THE LOCAL SPECIALTY OF KENZAN-CHO!?

WHISH

HUH!?

BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T KEEP YOUR PROMISE, I SHALL BE NAKED ALL DAY WITHOUT HOLDING BACK.

As your punishment

And so Kojiro-kun began to gradually adapt himself to the naked man...

UWOOH

I-IT'S MY FIRST TIME EXPERIENCING SUCH *HUMILIATION!! SUCH VEXATION!!*

Ahahaha

Ufufufu

SHIT...

SHIIIIT!!!

...Saotome-san is definitely hard to understand.

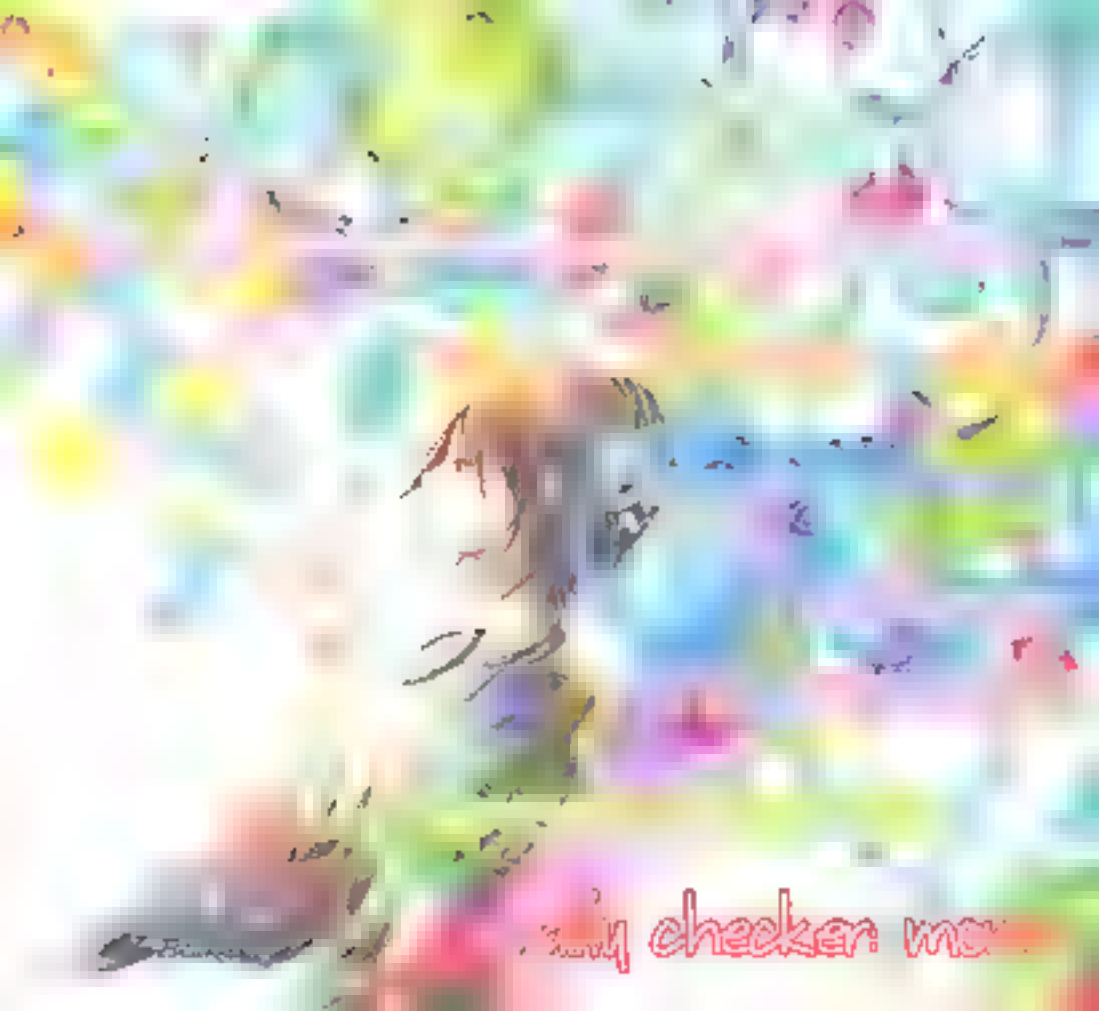
How long have you been here!?

LIAR!! YOU THINK THIS IS FUNNY, DON'T YOU!?

AS YOUR SUPERIOR, I'M CONCERNED ABOUT YOU AND NAKED-KUN...

SAOTOME-SAN WHY ARE YOU HERE!!!

END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The sixteenth story

FESTIVAL

CHATTER

CHATTER

TODAY?

A FESTIVAL?

WANNA JOIN US, SHIRO-KUN?

Here, your festival costume!

YEAH! THE MERCHANT DISTRICT WHERE YOU LIVE PARADES A FLOAT EVERY YEAR, TOO!

float = parade float

YEAH. THE TWO OF US WILL ALSO TAKE PART IN THE FESTIVAL.

EVERY YEAR, ALL DISTRICTS PARADE THEIR FLOATS; THE CROWD WATCHING WILL BE HUGE!

HUH!? WHY!?

OH NO...I'M NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN SUCH A THING...

TWITCH

BUT ALL GIRLS AGREE THAT "MEN IN THEIR FESTIVAL COSTUMES LOOK COOLER".

SOUNDS LIKE IT'LL BE A TIRING EVENT. IT'S NOT REALLY MY CUP OF TEA.

SHUT

TOSS

PLEASE GET OUT!!

LIKE I SAID, I'M NOT INTERESTED!!

.....

THAT LECHEROUS GUY... HE'S SO EASY TO READ.

OH, LOOK AT HIM. HE'S CAUGHT THE BAIT.

Tee-hee-hee

How unsightly.

Whisper

TIGHTEN

.....

GIMME A BREAK!

= READY...

THUD

SHUT

SHOCK

GRIN

GRIN

AWIP

HMPH!

...HEY, NII-YA.

Now I...

The only time I longed to go to a festival was when I was a kid.

Hanging = TSURI-ageru

Festival = Omatsuri in Japanese

AND THIS VERY POSE IS CALLED "OMA".

"OMATSURI" MEANS HANGING UPSIDE DOWN LIKE THIS FROM A TREE FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR.

TREMBLE

TREMBLE

LIAR!! LOOK AT YOU! YOU'RE DYING!!

WHAT IS A "FESTIVAL"? I HEARD THAT IT'S A FUN EVENT IN THE WORLD OUTSIDE

OH~~~ "FESTI-VAL", HUH?

KEEP THIS IN MIND.

ANY-WAY ..

Why is he the one who's mad? No one asked him to hang himself upside down..

Now my thighs are numb!

TREMBLE TREMBLE

OH, SHUT UP!! EVEN I HAVE NEVER SEEN THIS COUNTRY'S FESTIVAL!!

SLIDE

Well...

He's right.

WITH US.

FESTI-VALS HAVE NOTHING TO DO

深海魚園

There might be someone, somewhere watching me...

It's too dangerous for me to attend such a large event anyway

On banner: fishing pond

SHIRO -KUN!

!

THIS COSTU-ME

MAYBE I SHOULD RETURN

N-NO

Y-YOU OVER THER-EEEEE!!

YOU . WANT TO JOIN THE FESTIVAL, DON'T YOU?

SO YOU'VE BEEN HERE THE WHOLE TIME!

OFFICER .

Huuuuh!!? What is he!? A ghost!?

CAN I HAVE A WORD WITH YOUUUU!!

YOU, THE YOUNG MAN WHO'S ALL VIRILE AND SPORTY!!

UM. .THANK YOU FOR YOUR EXTREMELY THOUGHTFUL SELF-INTRODUCTION...

REMEMBER THAT, AND NICE TO MEET YOU.

I HATE PURE AND HONEST PEOPLE SO I RARELY EXPRESS MY TRUE FEELINGS.

UP WE GO

I'M SORRY FOR SUDDENLY COMING OUT OF THIS JAR. MY NAME IS MATOBA GOSAKU

CAW

CAW

BZZZ

BZZZ

THIS IS MY FLOAT.

DON'T YOU THINK "A HUGE PIECE OF JUNK" WOULD BE A MORE APPROPRIATE NAME!?

I WANT YOU TO PULL THE FLOAT THAT I BUILT! I WILL EVEN REWARD YOU IF IT'S WITHIN MY CAPABILITY!

THAT'S JUST WHO I AM! ANYWAY, I NEED YOUR HELP...!!

BOW

WHAT? A FLO-AT!?

I AGREE. IT'S ALSO MOVING SMOOTHLY TOWARD DESTRUCTION, YES?

CLANG

CLANG

THUD

THUD

CRACKLE

CRACKLE

DON'T BE LIKE THAT SEE, IT CAN MOVE QUITE SMOOTHLY.

WHAT!?

I LIVE IN THE SLUM OUTSIDE THE TOWN AND...

WE POOR PEOPLE ARE NOT ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FESTIVAL

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO JOIN THE FESTIVAL!

BOW

I'M BEGGING YOU!!

THAT'S WHY THE TOWN OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN GIVING US COLD SHOULDERS.

PLUS, IF DIRTY PEOPLE LIKE US WERE TO ATTEND THE FESTIVAL, THE TOWNSPEOPLE WOULDN'T LIKE IT.

AND SINCE THE SLUM IS NOT A PART OF GENTOCHO, WE'RE NOT QUALIFIED TO PARTICIPATE.

FIRSTLY, WE CAN'T EVEN AFFORD TO BUILD OUR OWN FLOATS.

AND THEY REFUSED TO PULL MY FLOAT...

BUT PEOPLE OF THE SLUM TOLD ME THAT "EVEN IF WE JOINED, WE'D ONLY END UP BEING A LAUGHING STOCK!"

OH...

SO I THOUGHT... IF WE COULD BUILD OUR OWN FLOAT, PERHAPS WE'D BE GIVEN A CHANCE.

AND DROP THE "-SAMA" IF YOU'RE ACTUALLY BEING RUDE!!

WHO ARE YOU CALLING A LUMP OF MUSCLES!!

BAWL

YOU-SAMA, I WANT THESE ARMS OF A TRUE LUMP OF MUSCLES LIKE YOU!!

I CAN'T POSSIBLY PULL THIS FLOAT ALONE!!

WH- DON'T JUST PASS THE PROBLEM TO ME!!

OH. SHIRO-KUN OVER THERE MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP YOU THOUGH...

B- BUT!!

BESIDES, I MUST PULL MY OWN DISTRICT'S FLOAT, SO... I CAN'T HELP YOU, SORRY.

ALRIGHT SHIRO-KUN, I'VE GOTTA GO NOW...!! I'VE ENTRUSTED THIS MAN TO YOU!

Mountain

NO! HE MAY LOOK LIKE THIS BUT HIS STRENGTH IS ON PAR WITH THAT OF A MOUNTAIN GORILLA!!

CRACK

WHAT!? A BEAN SPROUT LIKE HIM!? IMPOSSIBLE!! HE'S THE TYPE OF GUY WHO WOULD BREAK HIS FINGERS JUST FROM PLAYING CUP-AND-BALL!!

Moun-tain

Enoki

I WON'T GO ANYWHERE WITH THIS BRAT WHO CAN EASILY PASS FOR A FOR-GOTTEN, UNCUT ENOKI!!

UWA AAH!! IT'S OVEE EER!!

Enoki = Enoki mushroom

UWAAAAHH

I WANTED TO JOIN FOR YOUR SAKE AS WELL, SOSUKE...!

WE DID OUR BEST TO BUILD THIS FLOAT,

DREAMING THAT WE COULD JOIN THE FESTIVAL SOMEDAY-- BUT...!!

EXCUSE ME.

IN THE END, I CAN'T PARADE THIS FLOAT THAT WE BUILT TOGET-HER...!!

UGH... FORGIVE MEEE! MY FRIEND SOSUKE!!

JOIN THE FESTI-VAL.

SOSUKE... IS NO LONGER ABLE TO...

SOSU-KE-SAN NOW?

WHERE S THIS...

THIS IS THE SLUM WHERE WE LIVE.

GOSA KU!!

THAT FLOAT OF GAR-BAGE!

Aka haha

DID YOU FIND ANYONE TO PULL THE FLOAT?

WALKING TOGETHER WITH SUCH A HOTTIE, ARE YOU ON A DATE?

NO.

I WAS BROUGHT UP IN A SIMILAR PLACE.

A BEAUTI-FUL PERSON LIKE YOU MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO STAND THE SMELL OF THIS PLACE.

.....

THEY ARE ALL MAKING FUN OF MY FLOAT.

DON'T LISTEN TO THEM.

IS THAT A CANTEEN?

IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE.

HALF OF THE FOOD SERVED THERE ARE SPOILED THOUGH.

WHAT?

AND...

'EMPTY' CRABS.

SMALL RIVER CRABS.

WE CAN CATCH THEM 'N THAT RIVER SOMETIMES.

I REMEMBER IT VERY WE...

THE SIGHT OF SOSUKE'S BACK

AS HE ATE HIS EMPTY CRABS.

HE WOULD SIT WITH HIS LEGS UNDER HIS BODY

EATING ..DESPERATELY

HAHA.

THOSE CRABS HAVE LITTLE MEAT INSIDE THEIR SHELLS.

BUT EVERYONE HERE STILL EATS THEM FRANTICALLY

I BET I'LL LOOK COOL!

STANDING ON TOP OF THE FLOAT LIKE THIS!

GO-CHAN' I...

WANT TO TRY BEING THE LEADER OF THIS FLOAT!

SOSUKE IS A KIND MAN BY NATURE. HE WAS WILLING TO HELP AN ECCENTRIC LIKE ME WITH MY FLOAT...

HE WAS .. A GOOD MAN.

SMALL PAPER. RIRIKARU TENKA FANCLUB

TEN-KA-CHA AAAAAA AN!!

UWOO OH!!

リリカル天花命

AND THEN... WHAT HAPPENED TO SOSUKE-SAN?

LOOK AT HIM.

OH ..

RIBBON: "RIRIKARU TENKA IS LIFE"

THAT IS HOW HE NOW BE-HAVES EVERY DAY.

HE BECAME A DIE-HARD FAN OF A SINGER CALLED "RIRIKARU TENKA"...

TEN-KA-CHA AN!!

WOOH OO!!

L. O. V. E

TEN KA!!!

.....EH?

YOU KNOW WHAT..

BUT I... I'LL PURSUE THE DREAM THAT I SHARED WITH HIM! EVEN IF I'M ALONE NOW!

UM, IS THIS THE KIND OF TALK YOU'D HAVE WITH SUCH POIGNANT EYES?

Sigh

WELL...IT'S NOT LIKE I CAN'T UNDERSTAND HIM FOR WANTING AN OASIS IN HIS POOR LIFE.

AND WAS ALSO APPARENTLY ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FESTIVALS.

IT WAS A RESPECTABLE DISTRICT IN GENTO-CHO...

A LONG TIME AGO, THIS SLUM WAS A PROSPEROUS AREA.

OF COURSE, THEY LACKED THE TIME AND MONEY TO SPARE FOR FESTIVALS.

THE WHOLE AREA FELL INTO AN UNSPEAKABLE STATE.

BUT THEN THIS AREA DECLINED IN PROSPERITY.

I WANT THE PEOPLE IN THIS AREA TO RECLAIM THEIR PRIDE!!

BUT THAT'S PRECISELY WHY I WANT TO JOIN THE FESTIVAL!

WE ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES WHO ARE HAVING A HARD TIME.

FARMERS, MERCHANTS-- EVERYONE IS WORKING HARD.

THAT EVEN COMMON TOWNSPEOPLE ARE POOR.

WE'VE UNDERSTOOD IT ALL ALONG...

WHAT IS A "FESTIVAL"?

.....

SOMETHING THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US.

BUT IN ORDER TO DO THAT WE NEED VIGOR... PRIDE!! THAT'S WHY I WANT TO JOIN THE FESTIVAL!

WE KNOW THAT WE ALSO HAVE TO EXERT OURSELVES!

WHAT?

VERY WELL... I UNDERSTAND.

WHAT!? ARE YOU FOR REAL!?

THOUGH, INSTEAD OF REWARD MONEY, YOU CAN TREAT ME TO DINNER!

I HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE ANYWAY, SO I'LL LEND YOU A HAND!

YOUR LAUGHTER *ANGERS* ME!! YOU SAID THAT YOU RARELY EXPRESS YOUR TRUE FEELINGS, YET YOU'VE BEEN LEAKING YOUR IRRITATION HERE AND THERE!!

FRANKLY, I'M NOT SURE IF I SHOULD BE HAPPY BECAUSE AN ENOKI GUY LIKE YOU SAID THAT TO ME. BUT I'LL PRETEND TO BE HAPPY AND LAUGH...

Hana

THE REWARD WILL BE GOLDEN KING CRABS!

*EXTRA HIGH QUALITY!!

BY THE WAY, LEAVE YOUR DINNER TO ME! IF OUR FLOAT WINS THE FIRST PLACE IN THE FESTIVAL...

A-ARE YOU SERIOUS!?

'ES!

DASH

ALRIGHT! LET'S DEPART, BEAN SPROUT BOY!

THOSE ARE SOME COOL WORDS, BUT IT BASICALLY MEANS THAT WE'LL WORK WITHOUT ANY REWARDS WAITING FOR US, RIGHT?

Sparkle

STILL, JOINING THE FESTIVAL CAN'T BE MEANINGLESS!

HONESTLY, I DON'T THINK WE'LL EVER WIN THE FIRST PLACE!!

Chatter

EACH DISTRICT MUST DISPLAY ITS FLOAT IN ITS OWN TRADITIONAL WAY

AS A FLOAT ENTERS, THE DISTRICT MUST DO A PERFORMANCE

THEY WILL GATHER THERE TOWARD THE END OF THE FESTIVAL

RIGHT NOW, PEOPLE IN EACH DISTRICT ARE PARADING THEIR FLOATS

Chatter

Chatter

THAT'S THE FESTIVAL'S MASS MEETING SPOT.

WHILE STANDING ON THEIR FLOATS' "FIGHTING STANDS".

AFTER ALL FLOATS HAVE BEEN PARADED, ALL FLOATS' REPRESENTATIVES WILL BEGIN THE "FIGHT"

THE COMBATER WITH THE HIGHEST SCORE RECEIVES FIRST PLACE

FIGHTERS FIGHT WITH RODS. THE LOSER IS THE ONE WHO RIPS THE PAPER OR FALLS FROM THE STAND FIRST

IF ONE MAKES A MISTAKE IN ADJUSTING THE POSITION OF ONE'S FEET THE PAPER WILL RIP

"FIGHTING STANDS" ARE MADE OF SPECIAL THICK PAPER

THE FIRST FLOAT IS HERE!!

!

THE FLOAT IS HERE...!!

2000

crack

crack

IT'S THE MERCHANT DISTRICT'S "LEAPING FLOAT"!

THAT IS...

ARA-GAMI-DUNO!

HEA-VEE EE

HEA-VE.

HEA-VE'

HO

HO!

WE PRE-SENT TO YOU...

THE LEAP-ING FLO-AT!!

HOOOOO!!!

THUNK

THUNK

IT LEAPED!!

THAT'S THE "LEAPING FLOAT". THE HIGHER IT LEAPS, THE MORE PROSPEROUS THE YEAR IS. OR SO THEY SAY.

SFX: DASH, RUMBLE

EI-SA!

EI-SA!

EI-SA!

EI-SA!

MAKE WAY FOR THEM!

THE RUNNING FLOAT IS HERE!!

CHEER

Elsa - Similar to "Heave-ho!"

THE WESTERN DISTRICT'S RUNNING FLOAT NEEDS A LOT OF PEOPLE! THEY HAVE TO TAKE TURNS CARRYING IT!

LOOK AT THOSE WAVES OF PEOPLE..!!

SPEED IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT! THE FASTER THIS FLOAT RUNS, THE BETTER!!

SFX: DASH!

EI-SA!

EI-SA!

EI-SA!

EI-SA!

THE RUNNING FLOAT!!

WE PRESENT TO YOU,

COME CLOSER!

CHEER

MORE!

He's Officer's super or !

OH!

THAT IS THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT'S "ONE-MAN FLOAT" EACH FLOAT WEIGHS ABOUT 100 KILOGRAMS AND IS CARRIED BY ONE MAN.

COME CLOSER !!

CHEER

COME CLOSER!

THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT'S ONE MAN FLOAT!!

WE PRESENT TO YOU ..

SFX: SPINNING SOUND

SPIN IT!!

SPIN IT!!

HAI!!

A CHEER FROM AN OLD MAN LIKE YOU ONLY DIS-HEARTENS ME.

HARI-KUN!!

WAKA-BAYA-SHI!!

DO YOUR BEST!

SAO-TOME!!

!!

A FESTIVAL SHOULD BE GORGEOUS!

OH, LOOK AT YOU PEOPLE. ALL OF YOU REEK OF SWEAT.

T/N: Words of cheer

THAT'S THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT'S "DANCING FLOAT"!!

HAIYO ARA!

ERA-SHOI!!

HAIYO ARA!

ERA-SHOI!!

WHOA! SO MANY LADIES'!

CRACKLE

CRACKLE

I'M SUDDENLY IN LOVE WITH THIS FLOAT!!

IT EVEN HAS THE WATER TANK USED FOR UNDER-WATER THEATER AT THE REAR!!

THE DANCING FLOAT CHARMS PEOPLE WITH ITS BEAUTY!!

YOU CAN DISJOIN THE WALLS AND MOVE THEM SEPARATELY.

THE WALLS ARE JOINT WITH METAL FITTINGS AT THE TOP.

THOUGH I WONDER HOW THEY MANAGED TO PLACE THAT HUGE WATER TANK ON THE FLOAT...

WOOOW

THE GIANT FLOAT IS HERE!!

Oh. That's Komaki-dono and her father...

YES, FATHER!!

ALRIGHT, KOMAK! LET'S DO OUR BEST!

T/N: Dono: a formal way to address someone

GRT GRT GRT

HUFF. HUFF. HUFF

RUMBLE

WOW

THE GIANT FLOAT IS COMING! MAKE WAY!

WHOAAA

MOVE IT! MOVE!

WOW

SFX: TA DA

IT'S THE GIANT PLANET UNDER THE FOUR-DOG IN THE MOUNTAIN DISTRICT!!

-dog.

OFFI-CER!!

LOOKS LIKE THEY DON'T HAVE ENOUGH PEOPLE TO CARRY THE FLOAT

ESPECIALLY THAT GUY OVER THERE, HE'S SHOULDERING THREE MEN'S BURDEN ALONE

On ribbon: The Giant Float of the Mountain District

TURN

TURN

KO RA YA SA!!

EN YA YA SA!!

山大車

WOOW!!

EN YA YA SA!!

IT'S MOVING!

WE PRESENT TO YOU...

THE GIANT FLOAT OF THE MOUNTAIN DISTRICT!!

dres

MOVE!!!

HAAAAAAAAGH!!!

SHOW THEM THE POTENTIAL OF THE MOUNTAIN AND EARTH PEOPLE!!

ARE YOU READY!!

IN-IN-CREDI-BLE...

SFX: CHEER

SFX: SWINGING

IS THAT THE MOUNTAIN DISTRICT...!? DOES THAT MEAN OFF-CER-SAMA IS THERE..!?

W-WHAT'S WRONG, KOMAKI?!

SWING IT!

SWING IT!

SWING IT!

SWING IT!

WAIT! YOUR FACE IS A MESS! AND DO YOU REALIZE YOUR SWEAT AND BLOOD ARE *ALREADY* ON THEIR JOURNEY BEFORE YOUR HEART IS!?

DRIP

DRIP

FATHER, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME FOR A WHILE. MY HEART IS GOING TO SET ON A JOURNEY

See you

dash

THERE HE IS!!

KOMA-KIII!! COME BACK HERE!! *TO THIS WORLD!!*

WHOOSH

THIS IS MY CHANCE TO TAKE PICTURES OF OFFICER-SAMA!! *OH YEAH I'M EXCITED!!*

IS THAT.. AN EARTH-BOUND SPIRIT?

HEY, CAN YOU SEE SOME-THING FLYING AROUND THAT GUY?

fwish

fwish

fwish

fwish

On this day, thou-sands of pictures were engraved in Koma-ki's mind.

※ She burned the sight of Kojiro from every angle into her memory.

OUR FLOAT IS THE BEST!!

WE MUST NOT LOSE!!

CHEER

CHEER

CHEER

LIKE WE WOULD EVER BE DEFEATED BY THE GIANT FLOAT!!

NOW THAT IT'S COME TO THIS, I FEEL TOO ASHAMED TO GO OUT..

IF WE PARADE THAT FLOAT

TREMBLE

WE SHOULD GET GOING AS WELL

COME ON, PREPARE YOURSELF.

VIGOR AND PRIDE TO THE SLUM DWELLERS, RIGHT?

YOU WANT TO GIVE...

.....!!

IT'S A FLOAT OF GARBAGE!

EWW! WHAT IS THAT!?

crackle

crackle

DIS-GUST-ING!!

CHATTER

HEY! LOOK! THERE'S A WEIRD FLOAT COMING!

crackle

crackle

PLEASE MAKE WAY!!

W-WHAT IS THAT THING!?

WE PRESENT YOU OUR FLOAT!!

WE ARE FROM THE SLUM AREA!

KYAAA

KYAA AA!!

WAS THERE A GUY LIKE HIM IN THIS TOWN!?

A PRETTY BOY!!

ULTRA SEXY !!

UNBE-LIEV-ABLE! HE'S...

Shiro stays at home a lot so... not everyone knows about him.

THAT'S JUST POLITELY RUDE!!

YOU-SAMA, YOU'VE GOT TO BE THE BEST BEAN-SPROUT EVER!!

I CAN SEE THAT THEY REALLY LIKE YOU, BEAN-SPROUT BOY!

THEIR RESPONSE TOWARDS THE FLOAT WAS TERRI-BLE, BUT..

A-ANY-WAY, I'M GOING TO SPIN THE FLOAT!

SPIN

CRACK

CRACK

WOBBLE

WOBBLE

I-IT'S ACTUALLY SPIN-NING!!

GRIP

OKAY! NOW IS THE TIME TO LAUNCH THE FIRE-WORKS THAT I'VE PRE-PARED!!

YES?

THEY'RE HOOKED! I'M SURE THEY DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE THAT BECAUSE THIS FLOAT APPEARED WOBBLY AT FIRST!

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S AC-TUALLY SPIN-NING!

SOME-ONE TELL ME WHAT THAT THING IS!

FOR HELPING ME DESTROY THIS FESTIVAL, BEAUTIFUL BOY.

THANK YOU. .

BZZZ

HAHAHA! LET ME TELL YOU ONE THING.

WA-LAUNCHING FIREWORKS AT A PLACE LIKE THIS IS DANGER-OUS!!

WHAT...

!!?

BOOM BOOM BOOM

THEY'RE GOING TO HIT THE FLOATS!!

FIRE-WORKS!!

WHA-WHAT'S HAPPEN-ING!?

WAOOSH

SUSU

RIGHT NOW, MY MIND THINKS ONLY OF DESTROYING THE FESTIVAL!!

SERVES YOU ALL RIGHT! AHA HAHA!!

AHAHA. I STOPPED LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FESTIVAL FOUR YEARS AGO!!

GO-GOSAKU-SAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING!!

THOSE FLOATS ARE MADE OF PAPER, OF COURSE THEY'LL BURN AFTER GETTING HIT BY FIREWORKS.

step

WHAT.. THERE'S FIRE!?

OH NO!!

burn

WHAT!? THE FLOAT HIT BY THE FIREWORKS IS BURNING!!

BAM

!?

JUMP

JUMP

DAMN

Run

WHAT

GRIT GRIT

OPEN

CLANG

CLANG

WHA AAA!!

THE AQUARIUM OF THE DANCING FLOAT IS...!!

THE MER-MAIDS ARE FALL-ING!

WHOA!

THE WATER!

.....

AHH

...

SFX: FWISH

SFX: SCREAMING

step

.....

AHAHA. OH WELL.

THIS KIND OF FESTIVAL IS QUITE EXCITING TOO.

DAMN IT!!

THE FIRE WAS PUT OUT, BUT EVERY-THING IS DRENCHED EXCEPT THE GIANT FLOAT.

IF ONLY THIS FESTIVAL DIDN'T EXIST...

I ONLY WISHED TO DE-STROY THE FESTI-VAL...!!

I DIDN'T MEAN IT!!

.....!!

DOING THAT KIND OF THING...

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF SOMEONE GOT INJURED?

THE GUY YOU SAW BEFORE IS H'S COUSIN. THE REAL SOSUKE DIED FOUR YEARS AGO.

EH, ISN'T SOSUKE-SAN STILL ALIVE...

SOSUKE WOULDN'T HAVE DIED. .!!

WHY DID YOU TELL SUCH A LIE ...!!

IF I HAD TOLD YOU THAT "I'M DOING THIS FOR A DEAD PERSON", YOU WOULD'VE REFUSED TO HELP ME.

...
THAT DAY TOO, SOSUKE AND I WERE BUILDING THIS FLOAT.

JUST A LITTLE MORE AND WE'RE DONE. .

BECAUSE THE MATERIALS WE USED ARE WASTE ITEMS, WE SPENT SEVERAL YEARS TO REACH THIS POINT.

IT 'LL BE GREAT IF THIS FLOAT CAN JOIN THE FESTIVAL~

CLANG

CLANG

THEY SAY IF WE PLACE FIRST IN THE FESTIVAL, WE CAN GET GOLDEN CRABS.

HEHE, WE'VE NEVER SEEN ONE BEFORE, RIGHT?

ahahaha

BECAUSE I HAVEN'T BEEN EATING ANY DECENT MEALS RECENTLY.

OOPS. DOING THIS KIND OF LABOR WORK, MY STOMACH SURE GETS HUNGRY.

Growl

Sosuke died.

The next day...

A good person like Sosuke... His face at his death was excruciating.

...He must have been in great pain

He ate a rotten crab and apparently it caused his death.

...I terribly regretted it.

Sosuke wouldn't have died.

If I hadn't mentioned the Golden Crab,

he might not have eaten that crab.

If we hadn't worked on our float that day

Sosuke wouldn't have been that hungry.

WHY DID I LOOK FORWARD TO SOME SHITTY FESTIVAL...

I'M SO STUPID...

JUST BEING ALIVE REQUIRES A LOT OF OUR ENERGY.

YOU LOOKED FORWARD TO THE DAZZLING FESTIVAL.

BECAUSE LIVING IS HARD FOR YOU.

ISN'T THAT EXACTLY WHY?

LET'S AIM FOR THE TOP.

IF YOU WANT TO DREAM,

HOW ABOUT DREAM-ING TILL THE VERY END?

BUT, THE FIGHT IS ABOUT TO START.

ONLY THE GIANT FLOAT ISN'T SOAKED.

BECAUSE OF THE COMMOTION CAUSE BY THE FIRE AND WATER, THE THICK PAPERS USED FOR THE BATTLE STAGES ARE DRENCHED. THEY CAN'T BE USED ANYMORE.

WAS HOW YOU TRULY FELT, WASN'T IT?

"TAKING PART IN THE FESTIVAL TO RETRIEVE THE PRIDE OF THE SLUMS"

THE MEN FROM THAT FLOAT JUST NOW!!

EH!?

THE BATTLE STAGE FROM OUR FLOAT IS STILL USABLE.

NO.

IN THAT CASE, THE GIANT FLOAT WILL WIN BY DEFAULT.

THE FIGHT IS GOING TO START SOON!

GOOD! THEN PLEASE SEND YOUR REPRE-SENTATIVES TO YOUR RESPECTIVE STAGES!!

CHEER

FINE, GO AHEAD AND FIGHT

CHILL OUT! ISN'T IT FINE? DON'T BE SO STUBBORN.

WHO ARE YOU KIDDING! IT'S BECAUSE OF *YOUR* FIREWORKS THAT IT BECAME LIKE THIS!!

STAND

land

THE REPRE-SENTA-TIVE OF THE GIANT FLOAT THIS YEAR IS KOJIRO AGAIN!!

IF HE WINS AGAIN THIS YEAR, IT'LL BE HIS THIRD VICTORY FOR THREE YEARS IN A ROW!!

GO GET HIM, KOJIRO! IT'LL BE AN EASY VICTORY FOR YOU!!

OI, OI, IS THAT BRAT THE REPRE-SENTATIVE OF THE GARBAGE FLOAT!?

I BET HE CAN'T EVEN LAST FOR FIVE SECONDS.

BEING ABLE TO JOIN THE FESTIVAL WITH YOU, I'M REALLY HAPPY!!

YOU REALLY CAME, SHIRO-KUN!!

'ES!

EH!?

IF YOU LOSE, I'LL BE SELLING YOU OFF!!

AS MY SON, YOU MUST WIN!!

KOJIRO

!!

BROTHER——!!

SHIRO-SAMA——!!

GOOD LUCK——!!

GONG

AL-RIGHT ...

START !!

'ES!! DON'T WORRY, PLEASE SUPPORT THE STAGE PROPERLY FROM BELOW!!

OI, BEAN-SPROUT KID!! YOU REALLY WANT TO COMPETE?!

Swish

CLANG

WOOSH

CLANK

CLANK

HIT

Swoosh

CLASH

ARGHH

THAT BRAT IS ACTUALLY ON PAR WITH KOJIRO!

THIS IS SURP-RISING!

CHEER

CLINK

SLIDE

SWOOSH

MISS

Whoosh

SQUEAK

STAGE . HANG IN THERE ..!!

GASP

GASP

GRAB

CREAK

!!?

OH, NO!

SNAP

CRACK

!?

WOBBLY

THE PILLAR IS...!!

GOLLYWOW

THE BATTLE STAGE OF GARBAGE FLOAT HAS COLLAPSED!!

IT'S THE GIANT FLOAT'S VICTORY !!

I'M SORRY..

I DIDN'T GET.. THE FIRST PLACE.

I SHOULD BE THE ONE APOLO-GIZING..

BECAUSE IT WAS POORLY BUILT, THIS FLOAT COULDN'T SUPPORT THE STAGE.

'ES...

SHIRO-KUN!

ARE YOU OKAY!?

..BUT...

I NEVER THOUGHT THAT I COULD COME THIS FAR..

REALLY HAPPY...

I'M REALLY HAPPY...

...'ES.

SMILE

I have taken part in a festival.

Nii-ya

sit up

.....

chuckle

SERVES YOUR RIGHT!

... DESU*.

T/N: Shiro makes his otherwise casual sentence more polite by adding "desu".

The next day

I'M SORRY, SOSUKE.

AS EXPECTED, GETTING THE FIRST PLACE IS IMPOSSIBLE.

I WAS ABLE TO DISPLAY OUR FLOAT TOO.

BUT I'VE PARTICIPATED IN THE FESTIVAL.

AND YOU GOT THE SECOND PLACE, FOR REAL!?

HEARD THAT YOU REALLY WENT AND JOINED THE FESTIVAL

YOU GUYS . .!!

OI, GOSAKU !!

BUT I DON'T HAVE ANY RE-GRETS.

BECAUSE THE FLOAT COL-LAPSED, IT WAS THE FIRST AND LAST TIME FOR IT

WE CAN DO IT IF WE PUT OUR HEART INTO IT!!

SHOW THOSE GUYS FROM OTHER AREAS THAT

chatter

chatter

chuckle

.....!!

WE'LL HELP YOU NEXT YEAR!!

YOU'RE AMAZING !!

HONESTLY SPEAKING, WE THOUGHT RETURNING TO THE FESTIVAL WAS IMPOS-SIBLE...

EH?

HERE'S A PRE-SENT FOR YOU!!

TO COMME-MORATE YOUR PARTICI-PATION IN THE FESTI-VAL,

SHIRO-KUN

RUSTLE

SUCH HIGH CLASS FOOD IS TOO MUCH FOR ME.

...I'M SORRY, OFFI-CER.

DON'T BE SHY AND JUST ACCEPT IT.

THIS IS MY SHARE FOR WIN-NING.

RUSTLE //

LEADER.

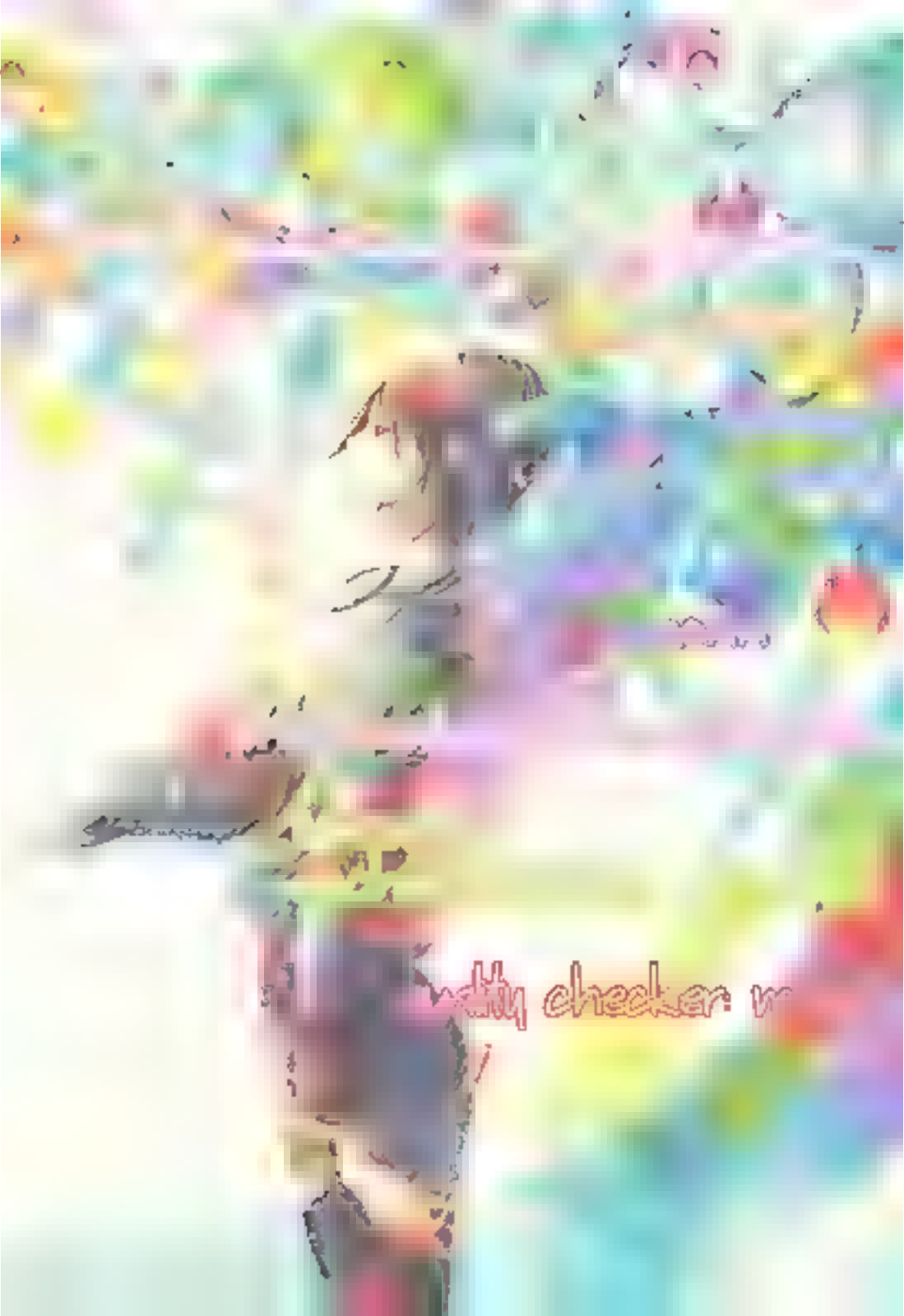
IS THIS FOR OUR FLOAT'S

Next year, I'll bring you the whole thing.

END

I see! So you're Kojiro's friend! You look like you'll fetch lots of money
And you're such a cute friend too! My name is Yamada Shuntaro~
Father!! Don't even think of making money by using Shiro-kun!
Shuntaro doesn't change a bit~
Yeah, he's still the worst man ever

The three of them are of the same generation.



TRY ME.

PLEA-SE...

The seventeenth story

SHIRO-SAN.

PLEA-SE.

.....

I AM YOURS.

reach

The seventeenth story
THE INNOCENT INFILTRATOR

Part 1

blink

SHI-RO-KUN!!

... RO... KUN ...

W- WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, SHIRO-KUN!!

BUT YOU SUDDENLY PULLED MY FACE CLOSER!!

I WAS ABOUT TO WAKE YOU UP 'CAUSE YOU'VE SLEPT LONG ENOUGH FOR A NAP...

YUCK!

YOU'RE TOO CLOSE, OFFI-CER!!

WHO AA!!

RIGHT BACK AT YOU!!

JUMP

I HAVE ... A FIAN-CEE.

IF YOU KEEP THIS UP, YOU WON'T GET A GOOD WIFE!

YOU'D BETTER STOP PLAYING AROUND WITH WOMEN!!

I'M SURE YOU JUST HAD A SHAME-FUL DREAM!

pow

A FIANCEE.

I SAID, I'M ENGA-GED. I HAVE ...

WHAT ...?

CRACK

MORON!!!

YOU

YO...

.....

THEN REPENT!! I'LL HELP YOU REFORM THIS INSTANT!!

JUST SO YOU KNOW, I HATE MEN LIKE THAT THE MOST!!

CLENCH CLENCH

YOU'RE ENGAGED BUT STILL YOU FOOL AROUND WITH GIRLS!? WHAT ARE YOU THINKING, BASTARD!!

U PLE- U ASE WAIT!!

N- NO!

STOP IT!!

O- OWW!! IT HURTS !!

SCORN...

N- NO!

ON HOLD!? *RUBBISH.* ISN'T IT BECAUSE YOUR EYES CAN'T STOP FOLLOWING WOMEN?

HUH!?

SO IT DOESN'T MATTER ...

FOR SEVERAL REASONS OUR ENGAGEMENT IS CURRENTLY ON HOLD (?).

DEEP IN MY HEART I CAN TELL THAT YOU'RE SPOUTING BULLSHIT BUT LET ME BUY SOME FOR YOU...

I know you're doing this on purpose.

RUSTLE

I THINK I'LL FEEL A BIT BETTER IF I EAT SOME OHAGI FROM TSUBAKI SHOP.

whimper whimper

U U M-MY BAD...

YOU SHOULD BE! YOU'VE HURT MY FEELINGS!

Hmph!

...REALLY? I'M SORRY FOR DOUBTING YOU.

But...

.....

What a simpleton...

smirk

slide... SWT

A bad omen...

Why did I have a dream about an event in the past like that...

What's with this tone...

turn

The sound of... a music box...!?

!?

The sound is coming from here...

RATTLE

RATTLE

Ker-chok

THIS IS... A PHO-NE!?

!?

.....

NH... YA?

SHIRO...?

IT'S BEEN A WHILE~

BINGO~!

I HAVE SOME-THING TO TELL YOU TODAY.

YOU KNOW,

OH, THAT? RIGHT BEFORE I RETURNED TO THE ORGANI-ZATION.

Ahaha

WHEN DID YOU SET UP A PHONE IN MY HOUSE!?

!?

I AM NOW THE SOUTH-ERN TROUPE LEADER.

TODAY IS MY INAUGURAL CEREMONY~! SOMETHING TO REJOICE OVER, ISN'T IT?

NII-YA...!? ...A TROUPE LEADER!?

YUP. SO I'M TELLING YOU TO GET READY SOON~

'CAUSE WHEN THE TIME COMES, I'LL EAT KO-CHAN AS WELL~

AHA HA!

.....!!!

NII-YA!!

KYUCHK

NII-YA!!

NII-YA!!

silence

UGH ...

...Crap!!

I

MAS-
TER.

For Nii-ya to be even more powerful than this is bad...!!

SHALL WE GO AND WORSHIP THAT WOMAN?

WELL.

OH. YES, YES. I GET IT.

IT'S TIME...

smirk

fidget

The Organization's Central Temple Entrance

MAY NOW EN-TER!!

step

TROUPE LEADERS AND THE R SUBOR-DINATES

THE INAUGURAL CEREMONY FOR THE NEW SOUTHERN TROUPE LEADER!

WE WILL NOW COM-MENCE

SHI-NONO-ME!!

NORTH-ERN TROUPE LEADER

step

step

EAST-ERN TROUPE LEADER

GENJI!

WEST-ERN TROUPE LEADER

OTORI!!

step

step

GENJI!! HOW ARE YOU?

SLAP

BEEN A WHILE HUH, OTOR!!!

Gahaha!

Haha

THAT'S HARSH.

THAT'S WHY THEY SAY THE WESTERN TROUPE IS WEAK.

YOU LACK SPIRIT AS ALWAYS!

Haha

GENTLE-MEN, I SEE ALL OF YOU HAVE TAKEN YOUR SEATS.

SHALL WE PROCEED?

Vance

WELL

I'M NOT SAYING THAT YOU HAVE TO BE COLD-HEARTED LIKE THAT MAN, THOUGH.

clatter

YOU MAY NOW ENTER.

SOUTHERN TROUPE'S NEW LEADER, YOSHIWARA ANRI

VERY WELL.

YES!!

I ASK YOU ALL TO KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN.

MEMBERS OF EACH GROUP MIGHT HAVE NEVER SEEN YOSHIWARA BEFORE. HOWEVER...

WELL ...

YOU'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH.

HE'S A MAN, BUT I HEARD HE'S A REAL BITCH.

This will be the end of the Southern troupe

BROTHER, IT'S MY FIRST TIME SEEING ANRI TOO. HE'S A FOREIGNER, RIGHT?

IS HE LIKE HOW THE RUMORS DESCRIBE HIM?

CLAMOR

HE'S HERE.

SFAP

SFAP

LOOK.

SFAP

SFAP

SFAP

OOO OH!?

BUT

HE'S INCREDIBLY BEAUTIFUL

W-WHAT IS HE!?

HIS HAIR IS SHINY!

SO THAT'S WHAT YOU CALL A FOREIGNER!!

LOOK AT HIS CLOTHES!!

GOLD AND WHITE!?

HE TURNS HIS VERY APPEAR-ANCE INTO A WEAPON. ANRI IS THAT KIND OF MAN.

BY WEARING FANCY CLOTHES AND EXPOSING HIS SKIN LIKE THAT,

MEN, YOU'RE TOO LOUD.

AND PEOPLE SAY HE'S A BITCH? SERIOUSLY?

He's extra-ordinary!

YES SIR...

BE ON YOUR GUARD.

ANRI WOULD GO AFTER.

PEOPLE LIKE YOU ARE THE IDEAL PREYS

step

step

IT'S LIKE THEY COME FROM VARIOUS PLACES AROUND THE WORLD.

ANRI'S SUBORDI-NATES ARE ALSO HEAVILY DRESSED.

!

!

grit

whisper

HE WAS YOUR FIRST SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER BEFORE I REPLACED HIM, RIGHT?

OH, BROTHER. TETSU-SAN IS HERE.

I THINK HE'S JEAL-OUS? POOR HIM.

LIKE A FOOL.

HARU-ZUMI, SHUT YOUR MOUTH.

HE GLARED AT ME FOR A MOMENT THERE.

glare

THE CHIEF HAS ARRIVED!!

I'M SORRY ...

chatter

OF COURSE!! THE CHIEF IS THE MOST POWERFUL AND BEAUTIFUL WOMAN HERE!

SHE'S A BEAUTY NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES WE SEE HER!

chatter

IT'S THE CHIEF!

I AM TOUKO, THE CHIEF.

OH, YOU'RE ONE OF MUTSU-KUCHI-SAMA'S FANS, HUH!

Ahaha

BUT MUTSU-KUCHI-SAMA IS ALSO ON PAR WITH HER!

YOSHI-WARA...

INDEED.

SO YOU'RE YOSHIWARA ANRI, THE NEW LEADER OF THE SOUTHERN TROUPE?

ARE YOU BY CHANCE, THAT PERSON'S SWORN ELDER BROTHER?

AND WHO IS "THAT PERSON" ...?

.....

THE MAN WHO WILL BECOME MY HUS-BAND.

YOSHI-WARA SHIRO.

WELL THEN, IF IT'S YOU, I'M SURE YOU CAN BRING SHIRO-SAN BACK TO ME.

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR HIM FOR TWO YEARS.

I AM SHIRO'S ELDER BRO-THER.

...YES.

Srin

DO SO.

BE-
CAUSE
THIS
MAN
CAN'T
TAKE IT
ANY-
MORE.

CER-
TAINLY.

I WILL
PRESENT
SHIRO TO
YOU,
CHIEF.

MY
CURRENT
HUSBAND

CAN'T
LAST
MUCH
LONGER.

twiish

twiish

I NEED A REPLACE-MENT.

TRUST ME.

FOR *ME* IT IS A FEASI-BLE TASK.

BROTHER, ANRI WILL ACCOMP-LISH THE TASK EASILY.

whisper

I'M SURE HE KNOWS WHERE SHIRO IS.

AT THIS RATE, IT WILL BE BEST IF WE MOVE BEFORE ANRI DOES.

IF WE CAN'T CAPTURE SHIRO, LET'S JUST KILL ANRI.

HE'S NOW A TROUPE LEADER.

THE RISK IS TOO HIGH IF WE MUR-DER HIM DIRECTLY. WE NEED SOMEONE.

NORMAL ASSASSINS WON'T BE ABLE TO SLAY ANRI.

WE HAVE TO FIND SOMEONE SUITABLE FOR KILL-ING HIM.

AS YOU SAID LAST TIME...

THAT SOME-ONE HAS TO BE

SO NAIVE TO THE POINT OF STUPIDITY-- THE KIND OF GUY THAT ANRI LIKES, CORRECT?

CLONG CLANG CLONG

CLANG

UGH ...

NHH...

CLONG

Shoot

!?

.....

wriggle

UMM ...

UHH ...

wriggle

HNN ...

blink

!

OY. KEEP IT DOWN.

!!

CLONG

WHAT ON EARTH IS HAP-PENING !!

WHAT THE... !!

CLANG

HUH!?

... WHAT!?

Y- YOU...

WHO ARE YOU...?

.....!!

CLANG

CLONG

IF YOU'RE TOO LOUD, THE GUARD WILL BEAT YOU UP.

I'M A NORTHERN TROUPE ASSASSIN.

YOU WERE KIDNAPPED AND BROUGHT TO THE ORGANI-ZATION TO BE A SLAVE THERE.

OH.

WE'VE ARRI-VED.

EH?

WHAT!?

NOR ...

NORTH ...?

THIS IS THE "ORGANI-ZATION".

WHAT...

"I MIGHT AS WELL DIE".

MANY TIMES, AND YOU'LL TELL YOUR-SELF

YOU WILL LIVE IN THIS HELL ON EARTH FROM NOW ON.

LINED UP

IF YOU RE-FUSE, YOU'LL BE KILLED INS-TANTLY !!

YOU LOT WILL WORK HERE FROM TODAY ON-WARDS!!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING !!

WHOA!

YANK

COME ON NOW! GET OFF!!

SLAM

!!!

WHY MUST I WORK FO--

THAT'S A BAD JOKE!

WHAT THE HELL!!

EEEK!!

HE PISSED ME OFF.

SORRY.

OY. WE WENT THROUGH ALL THE TROUBLE TO CATCH SOME SLAVES. DON'T JUST KILL THEM LIKE THAT~~

SUNG

fwoosh

NOW GET IN!!

WHOA!

PUSH

EE EK!!

GO, GET IN!!

GET IN!!

fwssh

What's behind those gates...!?

Such hot air...!!

roll

!? Something just came out of that room ...!!

roll

What's that!?

A person!?

roll

I- I DON'T WANT TO!!

EEK!!

NAN

C' MERE!!

IT'S YOUR TURN !!

PUT IT BACK INSIDE.

KICK

HEY, THIS ONE JUST ROLLED OUT BY ITSELF.

HEY.

HELP M--

H- HELP ...

NO!!

I DON'T WANNA ENTER THAT ROOM!!

!!?

HAND HIM OVER.

I'M BUY-ING

THAT GUY.

THANKS FOR THE BUSI-NESS.

clack

HOO... IF IT'S AN ORDER FROM A NORTHERN TROUPE ASSASSIN, THEN...

He was the man who talked to me inside the horse cart...!!

HUH...

GYAAAAAA

SWUSH

pull

AAAA

shove

THERE YOU GO. JUST STAMPED YOU WITH A "SOLD" SIGN.

UGH ...

UHH ..

YOUR SHOULDER WILL HURT FOR A WHILE.

I'LL BUY YOU MEDICINE.

HII...

UH...

PUH

LET'S GO. JUST BE GRATEFUL THAT YOU'RE STILL ALIVE.

On board: Medicine

藥

COME AGAIN ~~~

OKAY.

IT'S DONE.

I KNOW IT HURTS BUT BEAR IT.

UGH ...

RIDE ON.

clatter

TO THE STORM GATE IN THE NORTH-ERN TROUPE.

yank

WE'LL TAKE THE RAIL CAR AND GO TO MY HOUSE.

COME.

On the railcar behind lapel: Controlled by the Northern Troupe Northern Troupe Car No. 8

SFX: RATTLE

On the railcar railcar

RATTLE

RATTLE

MY NAME IS MIHASHI TAKEO.

...YOURS ?

RATTLE

LIKE I TOLD YOU INSIDE THE HORSE CART, I'M AN ASSA-SSIN FROM THE NORTHERN TROUPE IN THIS "ORGANI-ZATION".

I was brought to a place I don't know and got my shoulder burnt I understand nothing of this!

Wha- What's happening here...!?

tremble tremble

OY. I'M ASKING YOU A QUESTION. ANSWER ME.

sob sob

UHH... UU UGH...

!!

I'M ASKING YOU YOUR NAME!! ANSWER ME!! I AM YOUR MASTER!!

CALL ME "MASTER".

NOW, LISTEN. FROM TODAY ONWARD, YOU ARE MY SLAVE.

OTACHI? HAHA. LOOKS LIKE ONLY YOUR NAME IS STRONG.

EH...

O... OTACHI... IPPEI ...

The kanji for Otachi literally mean "big and long sword"

YES...?

YOU'RE LUCKY!! WHY? 'CAUSE YOU JUST BECAME A SLAVE OF A MAN WHO'LL SOON GET A BIG PROMOTION-- ME!

JOLT

Y-

YES!

I WANNA HEAR YOUR REPLY!!

SFX: RATTLE

I SEE...

A FEW PEOPLE HERE CAN ACTUALLY REACH THE TOP AND LEAD SUPER LUXURIOUS LIFE.

THIS HOPELESS PLACE MAY LOOK LIKE A PILE OF DUNG BUT...

flap

A picture of... girls?

THE PICTURE IS A BIT OLD THOUGH.

THANKS TO THE PERSON IN THIS PICTURE, MY BIG PROMOTION IS JUST A FEW STEPS AWAY.

RUSTLE

THAT'S RIGHT. I'LL SHOW YOU A PICTURE.

LOOK HERE, THIS BLACK-HAIRED ONE.

THIS IS AN OLD PICTURE OF YOSHI-WARA SIBLINGS.

THIS BLACK-HAIRED YOSHIWARA IS VALUED ENORMOUSLY BY THIS "ORGANIZATION".

I KNOW RIGHT? HAHA HA.

Both of them are such pretty young girls...

WHOA... SHE'S SO CUTE...

.....

Ko-chan did tell me...

AND ABOUT THIS PER-SON.

...DO YOU WANNA KNOW?

MORE ABOUT THE WORLD HERE.

IPPEI, YOU MUST LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MANY FACETS OF THIS WORLD.

...that, but...

Right now, I...

had no idea that I
would meet various people

and that everything
would turn into

a serious mess.

to be continued...

GOT IT.

squeeze

MAS-SAGE MY HIPS.

※ EXTRA MANGA

RO-GER, ANRI.

slide

SHIN-ZO, TAKE OFF MY BOOTS.

BAAAAAM

I FELL FROM THE COUCH AND MY BODY NATURALLY FORMED THE "SHEEEH!" POSE!

WOW!! THIS IS SO COOL!!

slide

OUCH!!

BONK

COMMAND ME AND I'LL DO ANYTHING.

Such an easy life~

HAVING YOU AROUND IS SO CONVE-NIENT~

POW

T/N: A famous pose by Iyami, a character from Osomatsu-kun manga

On book: Kakugo for Everyone: With this, you'll be DAMN funny!!
Kakugo: Japanese comedy stories

You had this "yuck, a rotten meat!" kind of face...

You know, you're strict when it comes to weird things...

I AM STRICT WHEN IT COMES TO COMEDY AND JOKES.

There wasn't enough vigor in your "Sheeeh!"

IT'S NOT AMAZ-ING.

AND NOT FUNNY -- AT ALL.

DON'T YOU FIND IT FUN-NY!?

HEY! SHIN-ZO!! THIS IS AMAZ-ING RIGHT!?

Look here! Look!

We can finally hear Shiro, Kojiro, and Anri speaking! My heart can't handle this!

Shiro VA: Fukuyama Jun-san Kojiro VA: Maeno Tomoaki'san Anri VA: Sakurai Takahiro-san

DRA-MA CD!

Can be purchased through Shinshokan

I experienced a lot of happy moments during the gap time between Adekan 4 and 5!

THANK YOU FOR BUYING ADEKAN VOLUME 5!!

Allow my cat to greet you too

HELLO! MY NAME IS NAO TSUKIJI.

TLE

Tra-ding cards!

Can be purchased at every Animate store!

I'm so happy!!

FLAP FLAP

I'D BE VERY GLAD IF YOU ENJOYED READING VOLUME 5!

THIS IS ALL THANKS TO ALL OF YOU, READERS!

TURTLE

MEOW

MAY I HAVE A MOMENT WITH YOU?

UMM ...

BA-BUMP BA-BUMP

GYAA AA!!

What the hell is this.

CLEAR CH

I FINALLY APPEARED IN THIS VOLUME BUT YOU DREW ME AS A GHOST!!

Love Scanlations
lovescanlations.wordpress.com
raws: morin
translator: morin
cleaner: marmei
proofreader: andrantedelights
typesetter: morin
quality checker: morin